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G. GUNNARSSON

Gunnarsson, born in Iceland in 1889, learned Danish in order to secure a wider reading public, since Icelandic—the ancient language of Scandinavia—is learned by very few Danes. His feat, therefore, is comparable to Joseph Conrad's in learning English; the resemblance goes even further, for Gunnarsson, like Conrad, is now one of the most widely read authors of his adopted land.

Back to the grey days, or the gay days—according to whether or not one has eaten red meat for breakfast—when the vikings infested British swamps, toured Iceland in summer, killed bulls and serfwomen for the sacrifice, and buried the swords of their dead relations with them, lest their feuds live after. Gunnar Gunnarsson, authentic descendant of the saga heroes, digs down into the pockets of his ancestors and finds treasures of virtue. Lief and Ingolf, who swore brotherhood at the spring festival, letting their blood mingle on the brown scarred earth, fight the sons of Atle Jarl for supremacy in the homeland and are driven out. Taking their wives, cattle, and the carved pillars of the chief-seat aboard their high-prowed boats they set sail for Iceland, and here Lief who would not sacrifice to the gods is killed. A stern, robust panorama of living, with always the wing of an implacable fate hovering over. "The Sworn Brothers" is one of the Gyldendal books now being brought out in this country by Alfred A. Knopf.







# THE SWORN BROTHERS

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## THE BORZOI-GYLDENDAL BOOKS

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**T**HE firm of Gyldendal [Gyldendalske Boghandel Nordisk Forlag] is the oldest and greatest publishing house in Scandinavia, and has been responsible, since its inception in 1770, for giving to the world some of the greatest Danish and Norwegian writers of three centuries. Among them are such names as Ibsen, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Pontoppidan, Brandes, Gjellerup, Hans Christian Andersen, and Knut Hamsun, the Nobel Prize winner for 1920, whose works I am publishing in America.

It is therefore with particular satisfaction that I announce the completion of arrangements whereby I shall bring out in this country certain of the publications of this famous house. The books listed below are the first of the *Borzoi-Gyldendal* books.

### Jenny

A novel translated from the Norwegian of Sigrid Undset by W. Emmé.

### Grim: the Story of a Pike

Translated from the Danish of Svend Fleuron by Jessie Muir and W. Emmé.

Illustrated in black and white by Dorothy P. Lathrop.

### The Sworn Brothers

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ALFRED A. KNOPF, *Publisher*, NEW YORK

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# THE SWORN BROTHERS

A TALE OF THE EARLY DAYS OF ICELAND

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH OF  
GUNNAR GUNNARSSON

By C. FIELD AND W. EMMÉ



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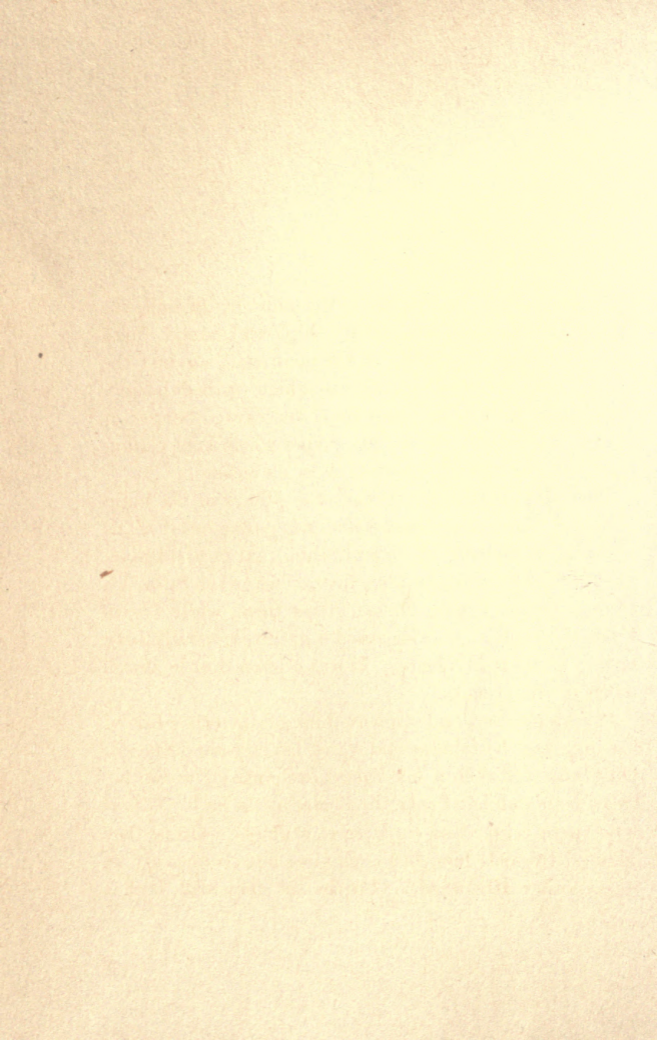
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BOOK I



## I

**I**N the red light of the fire in the midst of the hall, the age-browned pillars of the high-seat stood forth strongly lit in the middle of the main wall, against the background of smoky darkness which spread behind. The bright glow threw into relief the carved images of the gods, weird and grotesque shapes which kept changing as the fire blazed up or sank in its embers.

Upon the broad seat between the pillars of the high-seat, with the dragon-ornaments and gaping beast-heads of its back towering above and behind, sat Orn, a broad, grey-haired warrior, leaning forward over the table, his strong, coarse fingers buried in his thick, white beard. Upon the table at his side stood a great carved drinking horn. Orn sat in silence. It was seldom that he drank much in the evening.

One step below, and opposite him, on the other side of the fire, was the table round which his men-servants sat. Only now and then a low-voiced exchange of words between man and man broke the silence of the hall. Otherwise there reigned an oppressive stillness. Often they glanced towards him, but each time looked uneasily at one another afterwards. For he sat very still, with a

fixed, absent look in his eyes. A shiver passed through them as they thought that perhaps he saw something which they could not see. It was not comfortable in the hall that evening. All the more swift was the circulation of the beer-mugs. But they were not set down on the tables with a bang, as was the rule when they were empty, but cautiously placed on one side.

On a dais at the end of the hall, farthest removed from the entrance door, sat women at work, spinning and carding wool in silence. For once silence prevailed on the women's dais. Only a faint rustle was heard now and then when one of them rose to help another or to fetch more wool.

The only one who did not feel depressed by the silence in the hall was a fourteen-year-old boy, seated at the table right opposite the high-seat on the other side of the fire. He was content to make holiday by sitting quietly with his thoughts, and felt easy and unoccupied in mind. He sat quite still, letting his gaze linger alternately on his father and the pillars of the seat. He had little resemblance to the stalwart figures round him. His skin was as clear as a young girl's, and his long, bright yellow hair fell in heavy locks over his neck. On his face, with its regular features, there lay an expression of peculiar calm. The mouth under his straight nose appeared firm and composed. The look of his blue eyes was tranquil and fixed.

It was Ingolf, Orn's son. He often sat thus, especially of an evening. His attention was particularly taken up by the pillars of the high-seat. They seemed so strangely alive in the red light of the evening fire.



By day they were quite dead. It seemed as if the breath of the gods had crept into the hard, dry wood. Perhaps the gods slept by day, or had they possibly flown on adventures to other countries and lands? The gods had tiresome habits, for all that they were gods; one never knew exactly where to find them. Anyhow, the pillars stood by day as though they were empty.

But in the evening they came to life again. Either the gods returned, or breath issued at any rate from the inner part of the wood and seemed to wander over the surface.

Already in the gloaming, when shadows were gathering in the deep carving, they began to live.

But it was a strange, deceitful, and threatening life, as though the gods were ill-humoured on first awakening, as men are sometimes in the early morning hours. Ingolf did not like to stay alone in the hall in the evening before the fire was lit. He had a certain consciousness of the gods' discontent in the twilight, and felt by no means sure that they might not cherish some evil purpose. And when the gods were wroth or morose it was best to keep at a respectful distance. But as soon as the fire was kindled on the hearthstones, it became bright and comfortable in the hall. The fire sputtered with a cheerful crackling which seemed as though it were chatting pleasantly with the gods; it blazed up and cast its bright light over them, and diffused a kindly penetrating warmth. Then the gods recovered their good-humour; they smiled openly, and their eyes grew somewhat more friendly.

Then one ventured to look at them calmly and to sit

near them. Ingolf liked to sit quietly and look at the images carved on the pillars. Certainly those in the temple were far more splendid, decked as they were with costly clothes and heavy rings of gold and other valuable metals. But the gods in the temple were those to whom they prayed at solemn festivals and offered sacrifices. It required enormous daring to approach them, for one hardly ever saw them, and knew them but little. Although they were the same gods, they seemed strangely distant in the sanctity of the temple. The gods on the pillars of the high-seat, on the other hand, were house-gods. He had grown up in their company, he had seen them in daily intercourse, as far back as he could remember. He had long been confidential with them; they were his and the family's friends. They were quiet and peaceful and made no demands. Maybe they had fits of ill-temper in the evenings. But for the most part they were almost like men, saving, of course, that as gods they were naturally higher than men.

But one ventured — it was indeed a duty — to count them as friends, as belonging in some degree to the family. One could safely rely upon them, and that led to everyday familiar intercourse with them.

They constituted, besides, so to speak, the axis of the home. They were the immovable real centre round which all things revolved. They were the persisting element. They were the visible sign of the family and of the family's continuance.

They had become dark brown in the course of time, nay, almost black, and hard as stones from age. Ingolf

knew well how they felt. He had once, after a long inward struggle, ventured to touch them.

And it was not strange that old age could be both felt and seen in them. For no one knew how old they were, or whether indeed they had any age at all. Whether they were of the race of gods or men was therefore doubtful. From time immemorial they had belonged to the family. They had passed by inheritance from father to eldest son since as far back as there was any tradition, probably from the earliest dawn of time. The pillar on the right of the throne represented Odin, the All-Father, the old, one-eyed, and wise. His ravens, Hugin and Mugin, sat on his shoulders and whispered wisdom and knowledge to him. The ravens told him everything, past and future. So wise was Odin that nothing found him unprepared.

Odin was the Head of the Gods, consequently the most important to have as a friend. The place on the right side of the high-seat belonged justly to him. The pillar on the left side represented Thor, the Wielder of the Hammer, the slayer of giants, the one whose goats amid thunder-claps kicked fire from heaven when he drove to battle with the giants. Proudly stood Age-Thor, with his legs planted wide apart, his arm lifted up to smite, and in the bent fingers of his mighty hand he gripped the hammer, Mjolner.

And there in the chief seat, on whose brown, worn plank only the cushions and the sitters changed, sat his father. Ay, there he sat, cheerful and comfortable between his gods.

Every evening he sat there, when he was not out journeying or visiting, with his men sitting at tables round him, a step lower down. He sat calmly, stroking with weather-tanned fingers his thick, white beard, talked wisely, or was silent. There he sat at the feast with the chief guest by his side. And when it chanced that he raised his voice, his ringing tones filled the hall, and an attentive silence prevailed as far as the outermost seats. Though his father, Orn, did not often talk in a loud voice, yet when he did, what he said was weighty. He seemed then to Ingolf to have a certain resemblance to Thor, especially when he raised his powerful clenched fists over his shaggy head. Otherwise, when he sat silent and meditated, he reminded him most of Odin, except that he had two eyes.

In the chief seat his father was at home. There he sat, friendly and comfortable in the place of his ancestors. There had sat his grandfather, Bjornulf, who together with his brother, Roald, had been obliged to quit the old family estate in Telemarken on account of having slain a man. And there had sat also before him, *his* father, Romund Greippson. All high-spirited, strong men, whose names were remembered with reverence.

And some day he himself would sit there. And after him again his son, and his son's son. Generation after generation, family after family, till the earth vanished.

Whenever he thought of the time when his father would be no more, and he himself should assume the place between the throne-pillars, his cheeks flamed, and

a strange, anxious shudder robbed him of strength and will-power.

It was this knowledge that he would have to assume a responsibility, and one which he had long ago sworn to sustain with honour, and which he waited to assume with a mixture of joy and suspense, that had impressed on his countenance a composure and on his whole nature and bearing an air of assurance far beyond his years. Even before his bones had fairly hardened, he had had impressed on him by his mother, whom he now only indistinctly remembered, who he was and what he should become. With his mother's milk he had imbibed the unbroken traditions of the family. Before he understood what was really involved, he had learnt to understand that his life was only partly his own. Already, for a long time past, it had become clear to him, that not only his own, but the honour of the dead and the unborn was committed to his hand. For a man without honour cast shadows on two sides. Both his ancestors and his descendants had a peremptory claim on him — the claim of honour.

And he had no intention of disappointing either himself, the dead, or the unborn. Just then it was very quiet in the hall. The confidential crackling of the fire was the only sound audible.

Then suddenly came the sound of tramping steps without. Orn raised his head and was again wide awake. All sat still and listened. There was a knock at the door. Orn made a sign to the porter, who pushed back the bolt, and in came Rodmar, Orn's kinsman, followed by his son, Leif, and some servants.

The peace and quiet of the hall was suddenly interrupted. Orn rose with a dignified air. Stately of mien, he left the high-seat and went to meet his relative. His ceremonious "Welcome, cousin," sounded cheerful and hearty. Ingolf sprang up and ran round behind the seats to meet Leif. He greeted his relative, who was his junior by two years, with a kiss and very sincere friendliness.

Orn laid both his hands heavily on Rodmar's shoulders. "I was sure you would come, cousin."

"Such important news should be looked into," answered Rodmar seriously. "We have had prosperous though chequered years. What will happen now?"

"The good times are passed," answered Orn gloomily. "I guess what will happen. Follow me to the high-seat, cousin."

Orn seated Rodmar at his side, and called for fresh beer. They drank to each other with deep draughts. When Rodmar had sucked his beard dry, he turned to his kinsman, who was a little older than himself, and asked: "Do you think there will be trouble in the country?"

"Trouble there will be," answered Orn, speaking slowly and solemnly. "After peace and prosperous years follow hard times. We have had the good times; now we shall have to face the bad. Only it may be that the struggle will not reach these parts. We are getting old, Rodmar. Our swords are rusty, our arms stiff. And our sons are at the worst age possible—old enough to entangle themselves in difficulties, not old enough to manage them."

“I see that you cherish fears for the future, cousin. What do you advise?”

“I advise that you stay here with Leif and as many of your servants as can be safely spared from home. We should be prepared for everything. In times like these most unexpected things can happen.”

“I will follow your advice, as I always did. Do you think of seeking light on the future from the gods?”

“One should not trouble the gods before necessity demands it. But we should offer them sacrifices diligently and without stint.”

It was only a week since Rodmar and Leif had driven home from the winter festival at Orn's. But for Ingolf and Leif it had been a long week. They had found it difficult to be apart. They had had a cushion drawn up to the fire and lay there on their stomachs right opposite each other, each with a host of things to ask about and report.

Leif was a tall, loose-knit fellow with a long, bony face, browned with freckles and discoloured by wind and weather. He had a large nose, and a broad mouth with thick lips. The expression of his sparkling grey eyes changed suddenly, and constantly shifted from close attention to distant dreaminess, from icy coldness to beaming warmth. Red curly hair hung in long locks down both sides of his smiling face.

When the most important news had been told, he could keep quiet no longer. With a teasing look in his eyes, he stretched his head forward and asked in a

whisper: "Say, Ingolf — did your gods dine on the Yule meat?"

Ingolf gave a start of annoyance. His smile disappeared, and over his face spread an expression of vexed seriousness. He looked anxiously round, but discovered to his relief that no one was listening.

He made no answer, but looked angrily and warningly at Leif. Leif laughed softly and in a contented fashion. Then he made a funnel of his hands and whispered again: "They are fat, overfed animals, your gods!" He laughed deep down in his stomach, enjoying Ingolf's wrath.

"And such gods! A decrepit, one-eyed old creature, who has to get his wisdom from ravens! And a stupid braggart who is so poor that he has to drive with goats because he has no horse."

Ingolf clenched his fists and pressed his chin down hard on his whitening knuckles.

"Hold your tongue, Leif!" he said threateningly, in reply.

Leif laughed as before. Then he sprang up suddenly. By their side stood Helga, Ingolf's sister, a slim young girl with long, light-yellow hair, shining blue eyes, a small bright face, and a happy smile on her childish mouth. Leif, whose gladness at meeting again this girl friend of his own age beamed from his face and was visibly impressed on his whole bearing, embraced her, and saluted her with a kiss. Then he suddenly let her go, grew red and embarrassed, and began in his confusion to kick the burning logs.

Helga watched his action with quiet, smiling eyes.



"You are scorching your boots, Leif," she said, and laughed softly.

He stood straight up, turned towards her, and looked at her. And the smile in her eyes put his embarrassment to flight. Immediately he was himself again. Beaming over his whole face, he seized her two hands and swung her arms apart.

"I should give you greetings from the cat and from old Jorun. I have nearly forgotten to do so. The cat caught a huge quantity of mice at Yuletide, and then became fat and lazy — just like old Jorun, but she can't bear to be told so."

"Surely you haven't said so to her."

"Yes. I couldn't help seeing it. And when I saw it, I couldn't help saying it."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Leif. Have you forgotten how kind old Jorun has been to you since you lost your mother, and how many stories she has told us?"

"I can make up better stories myself. Old wives' tales are wearisomely long," answered Leif in a quick tone, which concealed the slight wound in his conscience.

"Do you believe she makes them up?" asked Helga, with an air of curiosity.

"She talks about gods, trolls, and giants as though they really existed. The other tales are lies too, I suppose."

"You are a stupid boy. How do you know that there are not trolls and giants?"

"Well, you never see them, anyhow."

Helga was already thinking of something else.

"Are you not going back at once?" she asked in an expectant tone.

"I hope to stay here the rest of the winter and all summer too!"

Suddenly both were silent, and found no more to say. For a while they stood and looked at each other and were very happy. All at once Helga became aware that Ingolf lay there, and had not once lifted up his head. She cast herself on her knees beside him and peered into his face. Ingolf avoided her glance, but she could see he was depressed. Suddenly she knelt up and looked penetratingly at Leif. The smiles and brightness had vanished from her face. "Now, you have been vexing Ingolf again, Leif," she said in a tone of deep reproach. Leif avoided her look, and took his place, a little embarrassed, at the end of the cushion. He felt ashamed, but wished to laugh it off. When he did not succeed he bent his head, and whispered so low that only they two could hear: "He ought not to get angry because I say what I think. You know quite well that I do not believe in your gods."

"But you ought not to laugh at them, when you know that you hurt Ingolf by doing so," whispered Helga angrily in reply.

Ingolf lifted his head and looked at them. He spoke calmly, and his voice was quiet and sad.

"It is not that alone," he whispered. "I do not mind so much that Leif mocks at the gods. But I grieve to think that the gods will some day take vengeance on you, Leif, for your mockery."

“When I do not believe in the gods, you cannot expect me to be afraid of their vengeance,” answered Leif, with quiet defiance.

He sat with downcast eyes, and a discontented and vexed look in his face.

“You can say what *you* like in return,” he continued. “Why may I not say what *I* like? I cannot bear the gods. And I cannot endure that you should believe in them either. But since you make so much of them, I will say nothing.”

“Yes, you promise that now,” said Helga. “You will have forgotten it tomorrow.”

“Can I help being forgetful? Then I will promise again tomorrow.”

For some minutes they sat silent and out of humour. Then Helga took Leif’s hand. “Don’t be cross, Leif. We have wished so much to see you again.”

Leif raised his head suddenly. He raised himself on the cushion, made a place by his side, and looked up at Helga with a smile. All ill-humour had passed away from his face.

Soon after, all three were lying together confidentially discussing their own affairs. The hall was full of the hum of many voices and a stronger odour of beer. The fire burned yellow and bright. And the images of the gods on the carved pillars looked down as if following all that passed with a slow content, and waiting, calmly wise, for what should come.

## II

A couple of months after, the two boys were riding over the heath. It was towards evening. The day was calm with biting frost; grey storm-clouds lined the whole horizon. The blue patch of sky above the heath grew ever smaller; it seemed as though a storm was brewing. Banks of clouds were already threatening to swallow the pale moon. The sun seemed stranded on golden mountains of cloud in the west. The two cousins were returning from a visit to their friends and comrades, Haasten, Haersten, and Holmsten, sons of Atle Jarl at Gaulum. Holmsten, the youngest of the brothers, was the same age as Ingolf; the others were a little older.

The two cousins had come to know Atle's sons at the great sacrificial feast of the preceding year at Gaulum, and had become friends with them. On Leif's side the friendship was not very warm.

During the last year they had visited each other regularly. And since there was still no sign of disturbance in that part of the country, they had obtained leave to journey to Gaulum again this winter. But they had been obliged to promise to exercise caution, to follow the main roads, to return home quickly on the least sign of trouble, and, finally, to conduct themselves circumspectly, and to remember whose offspring they were if anything happened. They had naturally promised all that had been demanded, Ingolf with the firm resolve to keep his word.

They had not had any occasion to break their promises until today, when Leif had induced Ingolf to make a short cut across the heath. He had twitted him with want of courage till Ingolf, in a mixture of anger and love of adventure, consented. Leif, who was always the most eager for an expedition, was, on the other hand, most quickly and completely seized by homesickness. In the morning he had felt that he must see Helga before evening.

And now they were riding here at a furious gallop. The long, wide, red cloaks, fastened by silver buckles on their breasts, fluttered behind them. So did as much of Leif's red and Ingolf's bright yellow locks as were not confined by their helmet-shaped caps.

Leif rode at haphazard and carelessly, satisfied with things in general, without thought for anything but the exciting present. He rode with arms, legs, and his whole body.

Ingolf, who sat as though of a piece with his horse, and moving neither arm nor foot, glanced at him sideways, and a faint smile passed over his firm mouth.

"You ride like a fluttering chicken, Leif!" he shouted to him as they rode on. Leif looked quickly at him and was not at a loss for an answer. "And you sit your horse like an old idol, cousin!"

The horses' frost-powdered heads stretched forward as they ran. Yellow flakes of foam flew now and then from their mouths; their warm breath rose like clouds of vapour from the quivering nostrils. The snow and the splinters of ice which they kicked up flew about the ears of the riders. Leif enjoyed travelling without re-

straint, and his delight found vent now and then in a ringing shout. Ingolf, on the other hand, rode in a mood of deep displeasure; but it seemed as if he could not give vent to it at once, for he, also, had become partly intoxicated with the wild ride. The rapid beat of the rough-shod hoofs against the hard, frozen snow sounded pleasantly in their ears. And the strength of the mighty muscles which were supporting them thrilled the young riders with a glorious sensation of invincibility, capacity for anything, and divine exultation which made their hearts light and filled their heads with blissful excitement.

The sun, preparing to glide down the golden slopes of cloud, cast long and fantastic shadows of the horses and riders over the glittering plain of snow. Leif suddenly became aware of the rushing shadows, and burst into laughter. He shouted to Ingolf, and pointed to the shadows, suddenly anxious to make Ingolf also amused at them. Ingolf must laugh also. But Leif's mirth was too violent, too overpowering. He laughed out all the laughter that there was at once, and left nothing for Ingolf. Leif's uncontrolled glee blocked up all the feeling of amusement in Ingolf, and directly evoked his dawning displeasure. He no longer gave himself up to the mere pleasure of riding. His fits of forgetfulness never lasted very long; thought and reason resumed their power over him.

There rode Leif, and was happy! Did he not see that a storm was brewing? Did he not know that it was impossible for them to get home that night? Did he

not reflect that if a regular snowstorm came on they might easily go astray on the heath? No, he saw nothing, knew nothing, thought nothing! He simply rode and was happy. And yet it was all his own fault.

As they rode on side by side, a sullen, smouldering anger penetrated deeper and deeper into Ingolf's mind. He had great mental stability, which is always something to hold fast to. He tried to struggle against his feelings; he would *not* ride here and become gradually furious with Leif. But the process in his mind had already gone so far that he was powerless to control it. What happened afterwards was in spite of his will and better conscience. Leif's ecstasy also blew up the smouldering embers of wrath in his mind like a pair of bellows. Leif's joyful shout caused flames to flare up within him. Why should Leif just now become so senseless, so idiotically happy? Why? Why? There were innumerable "whys?" to answer when Leif was in question. Why should Leif be always occasioning difficulties and vexations for him? Why should he be allowed to transfer all responsibility from himself to him? What was the sense of his alone having to bear inconveniences for them both just because Leif did not choose to be inconvenienced? His only fault, after all, had been that he had always been, and still was, too yielding towards Leif.

Leif, who rode there so merrily, without thinking of his broken promise or the gathering storm — did he not remember the gash from Holmsten's knife which he

carried in his coat as he rode? Did he not remember that it was solely due to Ingolf's presence of mind and powerful grip that the knife had not been buried in him up to the handle?

Ingolf was angry now. His perception was distorted by evil powers. He only saw Leif's weaknesses and failings, and they were many. Ingolf held a reckoning, and was angry.

Such was Leif! A child, a stupid boy! A forgetful and ungrateful beast! Not once in friendly games with Atle's sons had he behaved properly. Although Holmsten was two years older than he, he could not endure to give place to him in any matter. Times without number they had attacked each other like fiery wolf cubs. Times without number he and Haasten had reconciled them. Each time Leif had promised it should be the last time; next time he would be careful not to let his temper run away with him. But Leif's promises were like flying snow in a storm. Such was Leif, the great humbug, unreliable and unintelligible. Why should he, because Holmsten at parting had given him the knife he had nearly killed him with — why should he for that reason unclasp his most valuable money-belt, and with his own hands clasp it round Holmsten? Weaker characters could do that! Next time they met they would, all the same, attack each other like fiery wolf-cubs. That would certainly end some day with serious enmity between the two; and that would mean a feud with Atle's sons. It might well happen that Leif would yet entangle him in murder and bloodshed. Some day they would certainly have to quit Dalsfjord, as their grand-



fathers in their time had been obliged to quit Telemarken.

Thus Ingolf's thoughts were forced to run on possible division of the family, murder, and exile.

Why could not Leif be content with the difficulties he had stirred up for him at Gaulum? Why further entice him into breaking the promise he had given his father to follow the main roads and to be cautious?

At first Ingolf had only been angry with himself for having let Leif seduce him into disobedience and breaking his word. But in his present condition he had no power to apportion his anger. He had to heap it all together with the blame on Leif.

The riders had slackened their pace, and rode quietly side by side, close together. But they avoided looking at each other, and did not say a word. Leif perceived that Ingolf, for some reason or other, had become very angry.

That did not surprise him. Ingolf, who was accustomed to preserve his calm on occasions when others became angry, was also wont to become angry at the strangest times. Leif searched his conscience. It was fairly uneasy, as usual, but nothing more. It was impossible to see how he had deserved Ingolf's wrath at that moment more than at others. He had not mocked at the gods, and he had till just now been so cheerful. He felt a little irritated, and was also curious to see what had happened in Ingolf's mind, but he had resolved that it was not worth while to irritate him by speaking. He would see if he could not, by keeping silence, charm the anger out of him. Ingolf could not well remain

angry indefinitely. Still, it was a nuisance; all the pleasure of the ride was gone.

They rode on at a rapid trot, and Leif remained silent. But he was not accustomed to ride in that way. A great feeling of heaviness came over him, and quenched in its darkness all the lively sparks of his humour. But they would soon be home. He yawned till his jaws seemed to crack. Would there be a storm? He felt reckless. But what an endless way back it seemed when they approached the forest which they must go round. What sense was there in the forest lying there and barring their way to the valley? But for that, they might easily be home by bedtime. If the horses only had such long legs as their shadows on the snow possessed, they could stride over the forest. What wretched short-legged jades they were!

Yes, everything had gone wrong that evening. Nothing was as it should be. There rode Ingolf with a bee in his bonnet. One dared not even speak to him. And why had they no food with them? He felt suddenly so ravenously hungry that he actually seemed to sniff the scent of roast meat. Meat and bread and beer — hm hm! And now that he had once begun to think of food, he continued to do so. He could at last almost taste it upon his tongue. Could they not ride through the wood?

He suddenly forgot all caution and addressed Ingolf in the simplicity of his heart. "I know a path through the forest."

It sounded quite naturally, as though he had suddenly thought of it. But for those who knew Leif, his voice

was too sincere to be able to conceal a lie. Ingolf saw through him at once. So Leif was not yet content with the harm done! He looked angrily and scornfully at him. "Do you?" he answered, with an excessively quiet and indifferent air. "Then you'd better make a short cut through."

Leif looked uncertainly at him. He knew no path through the wood; on the contrary, he had lost his way in it one summer's day, and only with great difficulty got out of it again. It had just occurred to him that if he induced Ingolf to try the wood, they would be able to manage it.

It was only a matter of keeping the right direction, and that can always be done when there are two going together. The wood could certainly not be impassible. And to try it would at least be a change. To stay here would be tedious in the long run.

"Shall we see if we can find it?" he braced himself up to ask in a conciliatory and almost submissive tone. He dared not express his request more plainly; he was afraid that Ingolf had already seen too much.

"I'll share in no more foolishness today," said Ingolf coldly and decidedly.

Leif started as though struck by the lash of a whip. Ingolf's tone kindled a flame in him like fire in dry straw. The consciousness of having lied, and the fear of its being perceived, made him sensitive and irritable beyond measure. He was seized with rage, and felt a shiver run through his whole body. Senseless evil words and terrible execrations rose in his mind, but in such rapid succession that his tongue could not utter them.

With a jerk he turned his horse and rode toward the wood. He wanted to get away from Ingolf: he would show him —

Ingolf looked after him. And as he sat there and saw him ride away, his arms and legs waving all ways at once, a revulsion took place in his mind. His wrath had come to a head, and now began to subside. "There was no sense in that," he thought, and could not recover himself after Leif's disappearance. "I did not think to drive him so far. But surely he will have the sense to turn back!"

No, Leif did not turn back. And Ingolf, who had let slip the opportunity of calling him to return, could not yet bring himself to ride after him.

"Now we shall be separated for life," he thought again. "That is too ridiculous. That must not happen." He would *not* be separated from Leif like that. But the consciousness of his own right and Leif's obvious wrong had still too strong a hold on him. It seemed to him impossible to turn his horse round. Yet once more he repeated to himself: "It must not happen." But all the same he rode on. He let it happen.

### III

Ingolf rode on. The sun went down. A wind blew from the north, bringing thick clouds of ice-cold snow as fine as sand. He could not see the wood any more. And Leif had long disappeared in the sea of snow.

Night began to come on. A faint glow high above him on the left betrayed the whereabouts of the full

moon. With the help of that and the wind he tried to guide himself. He was so alone, so completely forsaken, as he had hitherto never guessed that anyone could be. And he felt his loneliness and desolation as accusation and guilt. He had, as it were, grown smaller since Leif had left him.

The uneasiness of dissatisfaction gnawed his mind like hunger. He was displeased with himself and also with Leif, but more with himself. He was, after all, the elder, and was responsible for them both. Also he felt seriously anxious for Leif. Leif did not know any path through the wood. He had once ventured into it, and lost himself. And if he lost himself in the wood in this cold he would be frozen to death, unless, indeed, the wolves attacked him.

Ingolf was in despair. He asked himself whether it were yet any use to ride after Leif? But now it was too late. He felt a lump rise in his throat. Remorse came over him like an avalanche. He had to defend himself in order not to be utterly overwhelmed. As far as Leif was concerned, it was his own fault. It was he who actually *would* ride over the heath. It was he who, in spite of reason, made for the wood. If he were frozen to death, or eaten by wolves, he only had himself to thank. But Ingolf soon discovered that these thoughts did not yield him any comfort. In the first place, he was not sure that the fault was really Leif's. He ought not to have allowed himself to be persuaded to ride across the heath, and, by doing so, break his word. Neither ought he to have become angry with Leif because he had allowed himself to be persuaded.

Least of all should he have let Leif observe his anger. For that was what had driven him to the wood. He knew Leif, and how susceptible he was. Treated in the right way, he was not unreasonable. By means of good-humour and friendly talk one could turn Leif's mind from or in any desired direction. But if he saw that any one was angry or embittered against him, immediately he became twice as angry himself. And all sound sense forsook him as soon as he became irritated.

And another thing: even if the fault was Leif's, that did not make the matter really better. There was, in fact, no satisfaction in being in the right as against Leif. Leif's whole character was so made up of hastiness and want of sense that nothing was easier than to be in the right against him. But that was not the least relief to his mind. Leif was not one of those to be settled with in that way. Even if there was not the least doubt that one was in the right, there always remained something unsettled when Leif was in question. Ingolf rode on. He forgot to pay any attention to the direction of the wind or the light of the moon. An absorbing consciousness of having done wrong, and of remorse, which continually increased, gnawed his mind and destroyed his peace. He could not shake off the thought of Leif. How was he now? How would he fare? He tried to persuade himself that Leif must really know a path through the wood, and might be home before him. Ah, how he wished that he might find Leif's horse in the stable when he himself at last reached home!

But he knew well that this was only something he

*wished* to believe. Leif's voice was so sincere that it betrayed him when he lied. Leif was a stupid boy. Ah, Leif! Leif!

Ingolf struggled hard to keep his tears back. He had not the least idea what to do. What should he do? He was riding here, and had lost his best friend. And it was his own fault. Even if he found Leif at home they would not be friends any more. And Leif, like himself, as far back as he could remember, could not do without him. He did not understand it all. He did not comprehend how it could happen. Yesterday, nay, only a little while since, they had been friends. Now he was riding alone in the night and the snowstorm, and Leif was lost in the wood. Leif had left him because he could not overcome himself sufficiently to keep with him longer — Leif, who this morning would have sacrificed everything for him, and given his life for him, yes, ten lives if he had possessed so many. He did not know any one else of whom he could safely say the same. Half his strength had lain in the consciousness that Leif was his friend for life and death; that he had, so to speak, two lives. He was himself also prepared to die for his friend. All the same, a sudden misunderstanding and a few words had parted them. For the first time Ingolf realized the dangerous power of anger and evil words. And he made a vow never again to be angry, and never again to speak evil words to a friend. It had a certain soothing effect upon him, thus to take himself to task, to acknowledge his failing, and resolve to overcome it.

But this was of no help with regard to Leif. There could not be the least doubt now that Leif was roaming about lost in the wood. It was hopeless to expect that he should have given up his purpose. It could never occur to him to be so reasonable as to follow the edge of the wood. For Leif knew nothing of fear or even caution, bold to the point of madness, daring to folly as he was. Yes, Leif was by no means merely a mocker of the gods or a practical joker. He was as fearless and brave as any one whom Ingolf knew. That was what forced one to love him, and feel that he was indispensable in spite of all his failings and the difficulties he caused. That was also the reason why Helga liked him so much, and became restless and lost her balance as soon as she did not see him, but immediately became quiet and peaceful when she knew he was near. How should Ingolf look his sister, Helga, in the eyes when he came home without Leif?

Ingolf rode on. He no longer knew where he was going, and felt indifferent. Without Leif he could, at any rate, not go home. He could not get Leif out of his mind.

Leif was in every way difficult and unaccountable. There was no use denying it. As far back as Ingolf could remember at all, he had had incredible difficulties with Leif. All the troubles he remembered to have had, had been caused by him. Numberless times, Helga had been obliged to appease greater or smaller quarrels between them. For Leif was really impossible as a comrade. One never knew what to expect of him, or what he might devise. There was no feeling secure



in Leif's society; he always brought, as it were, changes and adventures with him. But such as he was, one could not do without him. In spite of his difficult character he was such that one missed him as soon as he was out of sight.

Ingolf noticed that his horse suddenly changed the direction in which he was going. He did not take the trouble to check him. It was all the same to him where he went, now that he no longer had Leif.

He had wound his cape twice round him, yet the cold penetrated it. He felt frozen and shivered, but did not mind. It even had a certain soothing effect on him to be so cold that his teeth chattered. Immediately afterwards he had forgotten himself, and began thinking again of Leif.

Hitherto he had always felt vexed that Leif was not like others. Now he realized suddenly that, in spite of all, he did not want to have Leif otherwise. Such as he was, he was just Leif, and his friend. On his side the friendship was certainly not past. If he met Leif again, they would become friends afresh. He knew that Leif was always ready for reconciliation so soon as he had worked off his rage.

No, Leif was not like others. There was no doubt that he was a good and skilful ski-runner. He was always inventing new tricks and difficult feats. Wherever he found a rock or a hill he must attempt it. Not even the steepest descents made him pause. The fact that he had one fall after another, each worse than the preceding one, had no effect upon him at all. Leif did not like learning by experience. And, strangely

enough, he had never had any serious accident. When Ingolf had once reproached him for his mad foolhardiness, he had merely replied that he trusted his luck blindly for so long as Fate had allotted it to him, and not a step further! He was obviously not in the least interested as to where the limit was set. One might be vexed at it, but it was not of the slightest use. He had an incredible faculty for getting into desperate situations, and after all saving his skin.

The cause probably was that he was not merely a little unreasonable. In that case he would hardly have completed his twelve winters. He was, on the contrary, so boundlessly unreasonable that it seemed as though the reasonable penalties which always pursued Ingolf and all others never exactly knew where to find Leif, and therefore could not strike him.

Ingolf could not explain it to himself in any other way. There was, for example, the adventure with the bear. It was a year ago now, but he was likely to remember it as long as he lived. They had heard from the people in the farm that there was a bear's lair up on the heath, a place about which they only knew that it would be found in the neighbourhood of two hills which had been described to them. They were continually thinking and talking about the bear's lair, and could not get away from the subject. Both of them had a great desire to see the place. But Ingolf's desire was of the quiet kind which is compatible with patience. In his opinion there was no need to go and scent out a bear's lair when one was grown big and could receive him when he presented himself. Leif's desire, on the

other hand, was measureless and insatiable. "If you don't come, I will go alone," he said. So Ingolf went with him. They set out from the place one morning in late summer; they trudged far, found no hill nor bear's lair, but, on the other hand, came across a slope covered with bilberries, the like of which they had never seen. Immediately Ingolf was aware of a high-pitched voice within, which shouted, "Bilberries! Bilberries!" And that Leif must have heard a similar voice was easy to see. Crouching to the earth they went and gathered bilberries with both hands, eating the little bitter leaves along with them without hesitation, when they found opposite them a bear who was also eating bilberries. For a moment Ingolf remained standing, staring at a bear with a blue snout; then he came to his senses and fled for all he was worth. Not till he had run a long way did it occur to him that Leif was not with him, and that he was not pursued. He stood still and looked round, prepared to see the bear coming after him with Leif in his stomach and hungering for more provender of a similar kind. What he did see was almost more terrible. There on the bilberry-slope stood Leif and the bear confronting each other. Ingolf stood thunderstruck. Why did not the bear eat Leif? He did not understand it, did not see that there could be anything else to wait for. As though rooted to the spot, he remained standing and staring, and could not stir. It seemed to him as if several days had passed when at last something happened—the bear sneaked off. He could not trust his own eyes! Yes, the bear trudged away from the bilberry-slope and left Leif alone

with the berries. And Leif quite quietly resumed his gathering of bilberries. Ingolf did not understand it. He found the occurrence so unintelligible that he believed the whole must be a dream. He was soon made aware of his mistake. In dreams one is accustomed to glide comfortably through the air, but he had just to climb back on his weary legs to Leif. When Ingolf got near him, he stood and looked at him, and was astonished to see nothing remarkable about him. And so he remained standing for a time. There was something which needed explaining before he could go on with the bilberry-picking. At last he asked: "Why didn't you run?"

"Do you think one can run from a bear?" Leif answered quite quietly and as a matter of course. "What would be the use of that? No, I made him think that I was not afraid of him. And at last I really was not any more. So he got tired of standing and staring, and went his way." Such was Leif, and such was his method with bears. Was it easy to understand him? How could one get the mind with which to understand him? Ingolf answered himself with a meditative, negative shake of the head. And the adventure with the bear was by no means unique. He remembered another incident of the same summer. He lived through it again in his need to occupy himself with Leif, and yet at the same time forget that Leif at that very moment might be hunted by wolves.

They had agreed together that it was time they learnt to swim. Naturally it was just when no one had time to teach them. But that kind of trifle had no de-

cisive weight for Leif when he had got a fixed idea in his head. One of Orn's servants, so he informed Ingolf, who was a good swimmer, had shown him that he had only to move his arms and legs in such and such a way and keep afloat. Leif straightway laid himself across a piece of timber in the courtyard and showed Ingolf how to move his arms and legs. Thus; and thus!—that was all! It did not seem very difficult to Ingolf. But suppose one sank in spite of all? But Leif was unwearied in his persuasions — oh, it was ever so easy. You simply scooped up the water with your arms and kicked with your legs — that was all. At last Leif made him lie on the piece of timber and taught him the strokes. So! and so! Kick out strongly! Stretch your arms properly! Now, I bet we swim like a pair of seals as soon as we get in the water. Now let us go!

They went down to the Fjord. On the way he made Leif promise that first they should not go farther than where they could touch the bottom. Otherwise he said he would not go. Leif promised, and swore in addition. As soon as they got near the shore, Leif had his clothes off and stood naked and careless and stretched himself in the sun. Ingolf stood and looked at the water, and was a good while unclasping his belt. Leif jumped about and hurried him on, but at last would not wait any more. As a matter of course, he had either forgotten his promise or did not choose to keep it. Instead of wading out where he could reach the bottom he ran out on a rock, flung his arms over his head, launched away, and was off.

Ingolf, still with most of his clothes on, ran out on the rock with his heart in his mouth. Down there lay Leif; the water had swallowed him. He lay and worked his arms and legs. Now he approached the surface; now his head bobbed up. But only for a moment. His arms and legs moved very much as when he rode. But either he could not manage the swimming-strokes or they were no use. In any case, the water would not support him. He went to the bottom again.

Never had Ingolf been so frightened as when he stood there and saw Leif in the water — never so helplessly anxious and despairing. He stood, and could neither move hand nor foot. He felt paralysing terror like a dead weight in his whole body. Then he suddenly began to shiver. At the same moment all power of cool reflection deserted him and he forgot that he was no better a swimmer than Leif. He must get out and help him. And he was on the point of plunging from the rock with his clothes on when he saw Leif come crawling up through the water.

Leif crawled up and got his head above the surface. He spat and snorted and made grimaces. It did Ingolf good to see him. And he did not go to the bottom again. Leif, the incredible, swam! Not with arms and legs working on both sides as he had practised the motions. No, he simply crawled through the water with a long stroke and did not sink. It looked so ridiculous that Ingolf had to laugh aloud. No, Leif of course could not be so easily drowned as others die naturally. Now he felt the ground under his feet. He stood still, coughed, and spat up water and shook himself so that

the red locks flew about his head. He laughed suddenly when he set eyes on Ingolf. "What, not yet out of your clothes?" Quite calmly he waded to shore. And when he stood opposite Ingolf, he said simply and unaffectedly, although he shivered over his whole body: "I was nearly drowned that time! Who could guess that it was so difficult? If I hadn't just happened to think, while I was down there, how dogs swim, I should be lying there still!"

When at last he had finished spitting and shaking the water out of his ears, he took the same header again as a matter of course.

Such was Leif. He could not break his neck, he could not drown, and bears sneaked off when they met him. Could he, then, be lost in a wood and frozen to death? Or would he extricate himself again as he alone could? Ingolf thought it not quite impossible, and that was his only hope and comfort.

It would be just like Leif to crash his way through a wood in which anyone else would be lost, and to be first home. If only he were already there, in bed and asleep!

Ingolf was aroused from his reveries by his horse suddenly coming to a dead stop. He looked round him, and was not long in discovering that he had reached home. The horse had stopped exactly opposite the door of the stable. Stiff in all his limbs from the cold, he crawled down and opened the door. His only thought was whether Leif's horse might already be inside. He went from horse to horse, felt them, and noted their distinguishing marks. He knocked against his own

horse, which had followed after him into the warmth with its saddle and bridle on. He freed it from the bridle, but forgot the saddle, and went on. No, Leif's horse was not in the stable.

That was only what he had expected. Nevertheless, he felt suddenly paralysed with disappointment. Leif, then, had not reached home. Leif was still somewhere without. At that very moment he was roaming about lost either on the heath or in the wood. Leif's horse was not one of those which could find its way home by itself.

Ah, Leif! Leif! He hoped that it was not already all over with him. Ingolf seemed to see him in front of him lying on his back in a snowdrift with arms and legs stretched out. The snow was drifting over him and already nearly covering him. By the side of him stood his horse, with its head hanging down. Ah, Leif! Leif!

Ingolf collected himself. He did not feel the cold any more, nor did he notice how hunger was gnawing him. He shut the stable and went to the courtyard. There was something feverish and yet resolute about all his proceedings. He entered the outhouse where the ski were kept, and found his own and Leif's. He opened the house-door a little and whistled softly to his dog. The dog was wild with delight at seeing him again, jumped about him, and licked his cold hands with his warm tongue, while Ingolf, his fingers stiff with the frost, was buckling on his ski. He had no time to take notice of it. As soon as he had buckled his snow-shoes firmly on, he sped away from the house, the same way



he had come. Now he again paid attention to the direction of the wind and the light of the moon.

Leif must be found — there was no question about that. He could not return home alive without him.

#### IV

Leif had gone riding on till he reached the wood, his mind full of wrath and defiance. There was not one reasonable thought in his brain; he had only the instinct to ride on. The motion cooled his irritation. It did him good to be out in this wild, chaotic expanse. There was a sense of freedom in casting away the yoke of reason, a relief in knowing that one was committed to something which had two sides and might mean life or death.

He would show Ingolf that though he himself did not know any path through the wood he was not afraid of riding there all the same. He would show him that if he wished to go the straight road home he would do so in spite of woods and other hindrances! He would show him that there was a difference between a man and an old woman in breeches!

The snowstorm beat against him from the side, and he had to turn his head so as not to have it directly in his ear, yet all the same he had to ride with his eyes half shut. But he gave no heed to the weather. A man who was intent on performing an exploit could not worry about a trifle! Thus, filled with exulting presumption, he approached the border of the wood and rode

in among the whistling, crackling trees. Here he had to slacken his pace, and, as he did, it struck him all at once that there was a fair chance of his losing himself in the wood and never getting out again. But nothing could stop Leif when he had got up the speed for a piece of folly. Besides, it was part of his reason for not giving up his project that he was convinced that the worst turn he could do Ingolf was to ride through the wood. If he won through it, Ingolf would be mortified; if he got lost, Ingolf would be grieved. And Ingolf, sulky beast, deserved no mercy. How thoroughly he would look down on him if he happened to get home first! And if not, he knew well that Ingolf would not have a quiet hour till he saw him again. And serve him right.

Here in the outskirts of the wood Leif made such good progress that he already felt sure of getting home first. At the same time, he found room in his heart and mind for a certain anxiety regarding Ingolf. He hoped he would not be lost upon the heath where he had nothing to guide him.

Now that his fantastic assurance for himself had left room for anxiety for Ingolf, his wrath suddenly vanished. Should he not ride after Ingolf, try to overtake him, and convince him how much better it was to ride through the wood? But then Ingolf would only believe that he had turned round because he did not dare to ride through the wood alone, which was just what he was going to show him he could do.

His arms and legs came again into action. But the deeper Leif penetrated into the wood, the harder it

became to make progress. The going was not so good here. The horse went on at an irregular pace. Leif had continually to turn because of low branches and fallen trunks. He had to go slowly and gradually, step by step.

Besides, it was not very comfortable here in the dense parts of the wood. Leif did not venture to startle his horse by shouting, though he was not really afraid. But all the sounds which he could not account for made him silent and alert. On all sides there was an uninterrupted whistling, creaking, and groaning. Snow fell from the branches with a thump. Hasty flappings of wings, which sent a chill through him, penetrated through all other sounds, producing a foreboding sense of vacuity and gloom. Besides, it was darker here than was pleasant. He could hardly discern the nearest tree-trunks. He wished he were out on the heath again and in Ingolf's company. What had he wanted to go to the wood for?

Leif was not long in losing himself so completely that he thought it just as well to give up altogether aiming at any particular direction, and go on at haphazard. He felt it really a relief to be free from the trouble. The chief thing now was to sit on his horse and keep warm, which was beginning to be a difficulty.

But now Leif was in high spirits and proof against blows. He had prepared his mind for troubles and schooled himself to confront Fate. He had cast all responsibility from him far into space! Let any one who chose undertake it! He was riding here — that

was all. Could his horse get on? Let happen what would!

He did not doubt for a moment that the matter would finally turn out well for him. He would get clear. *How*, he did not guess, neither did he trouble himself about it. He had reasonably or unreasonably come to the conclusion that he might just as well stop interfering. Yes, he would not venture to interfere. Suppose he turned off to the left now, and by doing so lost the right direction? No, he would not touch the bridle, but simply trust to luck. If he must pay the price for his rashness, he might just as well do it with the same coin. And if he got home in that way, the account would be settled.

Thus he rode for a long time, but not so long as he thought. He was checked in his progress, and therefore the time seemed more than doubled. He thought he got on faster than he actually did. At last he sat half asleep upon his horse, which he kept going by half-mechanical movements of his arms and legs. The horse went slower and slower. It had lost heart, and would rather have stood still, hung its head, turned its back to the storm, and let time and destiny roll over it. Leif did not agree with the horse in the matter. He himself sat there and let come what would. But something must be kept going, or there would be a complete full-stop. So the horse must continue.

But that was so contrary to the horse's will that Leif at last had to shake off his drowsiness in order to keep the animal going. And, in spite of all, it only went step by step.

Leif was working again with his whole body. Nevertheless, he felt how the cold was tightening its clutch on his limbs and already threatening his stomach and chest. Leif was no fool. He clearly perceived that his life was in danger. In full consciousness he took up the struggle against weariness, which by its temptation to drowsiness sought to surprise him with sleep, that would be fatal in the frost.

Leif rallied himself with a firm resolve. That was not at all to his mind. He did not in the least intend to give up. Twelve years could not satisfy a hunger for life like his. He had much to do in the world. He was, for one thing, a good way yet from becoming a Viking and marrying Helga. Would the forest never come to an end?

At last it did. Leif went on riding and riding. And what did he see? Tracks of a horse which had been going through the snow. So he had then been riding in a circle. And where was he? That the wood only knew.

But now he would follow the tracks in the direction he had come from to see if he could break the circle and, if possible, find his way out of the wood.

Now it seemed to him the chief thing to find his way out, no matter where. That was for the present object enough. He resolutely avoided looking further in his thoughts. Unconsciously he armed himself against the tendency of thought to weaken the mind. He would not have his strength paralysed by too much reasoning. His business was simply to ride on and fight against the cold.

He had lost the track again. The horse became more and more unwilling to proceed. It only went on because it must.

Suddenly and unexpectedly he noticed that he was out of the wood. He saw no more tree-trunks. Here there were only whirling clouds of snow around him. His only resource was to go on. He kept riding to see whether he would not come across trees farther on. No, there were no more trees. And what was he to do now?

On which side of the wood was he? He rallied his reasoning power and reflected. Yes, he must be on the same side by which he had entered. The wind was due north — the direction he came from — there then was the north. So he had been very sagacious as far as *looking* went. He should only have been sharp enough to see when the wood ended, then he would have had the edge of the wood to guide himself by. Should he turn round and try to find the wood again? No, no, he might get among the trees. And he had lost all desire to ride to the wood. The horse had availed itself of Leif's reflections to come to a stop. Without Leif having noticed it, it had turned its back to the storm, and simply stood still with its head drooping.

Leif sought to rouse it up and set it in motion again. Here there was no use in remaining at a standstill. But the horse had formed its own opinion of the whole expedition. It stood immovable, and intended to remain so. Leif expended much energy on its back, tugged at the reins, struck it with his whip-handle, since lashing seemed of no avail, but it was useless. The horse had had enough and more than enough. It stood,

and intended to remain standing for an indefinite time. Leif jumped down and looked with astonishment in its eyes. What was the matter with the beast? Had it suddenly got fancies in its head? He pulled at the bridle, tried to tug the horse to one side, and made his whip whistle over it. The horse sighed a little at such a cruel and senseless proceeding. But it had once for all made up its mind to stay where it was. At that moment there was nothing that would make it budge an inch from the spot.

Leif looked helplessly around him. He could not understand the horse's sudden predilection for precisely *that* spot of ground. Was there perhaps something to guide them? Completely exhausted it could not be, as there was still so much refractoriness in it.

So he tried to treat it kindly. He talked gently to it, patted it, and scratched it behind the ears. He overwhelmed it with flattery, and sang to it in a high-pitched voice. Then he clambered with some trouble on its back again, and hoped that it had now changed its mind. But it had not done so by any means. Leif began to get angry, but he patted its neck and kept a friendly tone. Since this still proved useless he uttered a wild howl with all his might, and threw his arms, legs, and whole body into motion. At last he was nearly crying with vexation. Then he tried it again with friendliness and kind words, but it was all of no avail.

So he gave it up. The horse evidently *would* not go farther. And since he could neither compel nor persuade it, there was nothing to be done with the creature.

He slipped from its back and tried to review the

situation. On nearer inspection it seemed to be just as threatening and impenetrable as the snow-clouds round him. As he stood there the wind lashed his face and pierced icily cold through his clothes. He perceived clearly the danger of the situation. If the cold and his weariness made him yield a little, it was all over with him.

It was no use to let the horse stand and go on with his own strength. The energies he had still in reserve were in no reasonable proportion to the storm and the length of the way. It was only a *little* strength and endurance which he had remaining. But it was that little which was to rescue him. He kept his hands tightly clenched together as if it were a matter of extracting some device by purely physical pressure from his oozing energies. He intensified his thoughts till he seemed to hear them beating in his skull. But it was as though all possibilities had conspired against him and forsaken him.

He stood and set his back against the wind, and sought to combat a creeping foreboding that there was no way of escape. He knew that once he gave up it was all over with him. So long as he could keep erect and resolute there was still hope.

His thoughts forsook the beaten paths and travelled in the labyrinths of imagination, seeking a last possibility. A picture came up in his memory. He remembered a Yuletide sacrificial feast at home . . . the penetrating odour of blood and entrails . . . the warm, gaping hollow of an ox's body emptied of its viscera. Before he had yet time to connect thought with action,



his knife was out. He took the bridle off the horse, with feverish fingers sought a certain spot in its neck, waited a moment while he overcame his repugnance, and then made a thrust. With a groan the horse collapsed on its knees. Leif rolled it over on one side, and so it remained, lying with stiff, struggling legs, now and then shaken by a faint shudder. Leif made a cut in its neck, so that he could, when possible, extract the windpipe and gullet. A warm stream of blood spouted straight into his eyes and blinded him till he had again rubbed them clean. And now the intoxication of blood overcame him. He had the scent of it in his nostrils and the taste of it on his tongue. With a single long cut from the fore to the hinder-part he slit open its stomach. The warm, smoking entrails bulged out of the streaming gash. Leif snatched them out with his hands, but had to stop, because the heat nearly scalded him — shook his hands like a cat its paws — and set to work again. In a very short time he had cleared the animal's stomach of all the entrails, with a round cut of his knife he loosened the diaphragm, extracted the lungs with the grey windpipe adhering to them from the breast, and threw them away. Then at last, with trembling fingers, he sheathed his knife, heaved a long sigh, and crawled head-first into the horse's empty stomach. He coiled himself together like an animal, audibly growling with the sense of comfort and the prospect of secure rest. But however he turned and twisted himself, he could not find room for his legs. So he crawled rather crossly out again, stripped off his cloak, wound it several times round his feet and legs above his knees, to preserve them

from being frostbitten, and crept in again. He enjoyed the delightful warmth inside. Now it would do him real good to have his rest out and sleep. With a light and untroubled heart he lay down comfortably. Sleep — sleep. When he awoke again, the snowstorm would doubtless be over. He chuckled inwardly; he would simply stay here till it was quite finished! If it still lasted long he could easily live on frozen horse-flesh. He had still a conviction that he would not die that day. Nonsense! Here he lay, and liked it. The future seemed bright and cheerful to his inner eye. He wondered whether Ingolf would be home by now? In his fulness of satisfaction and quiet he allowed himself to hope so. A little after he was sleeping a sound, untroubled sleep.

## V

Ingolf bore towards the west. He had the wind on his right side, a little against him. He had to climb rising ground, although not very steep. He only made slow progress. But he felt his strength and how his body was, as it were, braced together in one strain. And it was as though this consciousness of his own strength continually produced new strength again. He was so absolutely determined to hold out till he found Leif or fell dead that there was not the slightest breach in his will, where doubt and fatigue might insinuate their poisonous disintegrating vapours.

For the present, his object was only to go round the wood to the other side and see whether he could not find

Leif's tracks and the place where he had entered the wood. If he could find Leif's, or rather the horse's, tracks, his dog would be a considerable help in following them. And if *he* could not find them, it was not impossible that the dog might. Such was Ingolf's plan.

Now and then he looked at the dog faithfully plodding after him. When it ran along unnoticed, it dropped its tail discontentedly. It did not see any object in such an expedition in this weather, and could not possibly approve of it at first. But as soon as Ingolf spoke kindly to it, or it only noticed that it was observed, it cocked its tail and sprang forward at his side, gladly barking, and talked to him in dog-language.

They went steadily forward, although their progress was slow. To his joy, Ingolf noticed that the wind was abating. The snow-clouds were gradually dividing, and the moon's pale disc shone against a background of blue. Around him spread a white expanse, abruptly broken by the dark line of the edge of the wood a little to the right. There was no longer an upward incline; he sped along easily and softly on his ski, and looked about him. The snow-clouds as they departed opened an ever-widening horizon to his view. He must clearly ascertain where he was. Now he knew the place and could do that correctly for himself. Yes, he was up on the heath, and had only to turn to the right and follow the line of the wood. His snow-shoes glided easily upon the smooth, even surface of the snow. With each step he increased his speed. For now a mental tension took hold of him, and filled him with restlessness. He called to his dog, roused it up, and urged it on with short,

explanatory shouts. He made it understand that he was seeking something, and counted on its help. Suddenly the dog was awake in every nerve. Now he could understand his master and feel with him. Eagerly he ran on ahead, nosing at the snow. Hither and thither he ran, in larger and smaller curves. Now and then Ingolf seemed to perceive in it an impulse to stand still. But it never came completely to a stop, only making a half pause. The dog was so engrossed in its mission of finding something, though it knew not what, that it completely forgot its tail, and let it hang obliquely down behind, completing the impression of self-forgetting absorption.

It was as though Ingolf's mental tension had transferred itself to the animal, which continually increased its speed. Ingolf had difficulty in keeping up, although he sped as though for his life, so that the sweat poured in streams down over his face and dropped from his eyebrows and chin.

Thus they sped on for a long time. Ingolf knew well that he must husband his strength. But it seemed as though the part of his excitement which had communicated itself to the dog had returned to him with double strength. He completely forgot to economize his forces. He put them all forth, well knowing that by doing so he imperilled the success of his quest. He simply could not do otherwise. The one thing was to hold out and follow the dog. He dared not keep it back. "On!" he said to himself. "As long as you can keep your head up."

Suddenly the dog stopped and began running round

and round. Ingolf was a good way behind him. He hurried on as quickly as possible, and gave close attention to the animal, which now stood and sniffed for a time. Then it ran a little way in the direction of the wood. Oho! Here it was, then! But what now? The dog stood still, sniffed, and ran some way back. Then it paused again. What was the matter?

And see! Now it lifted its head, stood and sniffed now towards the wood, now in the opposite direction, with a slight, hasty jerk of its body. Its tail was lifted too, and stood straight out.

Now Ingolf felt certain. This was where he should enter the wood. Now there remained nothing necessary but to take off his ski and to walk.

But before he had quite got up to the dog, the latter had already started again — away from the wood. Ingolf shouted to it. It must be mistaken. It stood still as it was ordered, but did not come back. It remained standing, waiting for further directions. Ingolf called it again, but it remained standing as before. And now Ingolf heard it utter a low whine. What did it want? Ingolf shouted encouragingly to it and immediately it started off again. Ingolf followed, without yet leaving the edge of the wood. He thought the dog was still on the track, and only following it in the wrong direction. It would soon perceive its mistake and turn round.

But it was far from turning round. On the contrary, it came to a stop and remained standing by a slight elevation in the snow. There it paused and ran about, nosing here and there eagerly. It was easy to see that it had found something of great importance.

Ingolf came to a stop. He had to rally all his will power in order not to collapse.

He could not stir from the spot. Was Leif lying there? Had a tragedy happened after all? The gods he had braved had at last taken vengeance on Leif for his insolence and mockery. Ingolf felt himself struck in a vital nerve. For how could he live after that?

As he stood there it occurred to him suddenly that here his race came to an end. Leif was dear. Only he and Helga were left. He with a stain upon his honour — in a fit of temper he had let Leif ride unhindered away from him to meet obvious death — a stain he could only wash away in one way — by giving himself a sacrifice to Odin. And Helga . . . yes, Helga would not survive that. So here the race would cease. All his dreams, all his purposes blown away like chaff before the wind.

Suddenly Ingolf heard the dog close by him. It stood in front of him, with its snout lifted and its ears laid back, whining up at him. At first he looked down without seeing it and without giving heed to its suppliant look; then suddenly he woke to attention. The dog certainly did not look sorrowful. It looked rather as if it had something special, and to a certain degree joyful, to announce. And its whining also seemed to signify the same.

In Ingolf's mind there dawned a spark of hope. He set his ski in motion and followed the dog.

But the nearer he came to the white mound, by which his dog already stood, looking back beseechingly and whining softly — the slower he moved. Suddenly he stood still as though struck. What was it? What

sort of a sound was that? He stood still awhile and collected himself to listen. But his own blood's throbbing made it hard for him to interpret the sound he heard. Suddenly the sound grew louder, till here was no mistaking it. It was the heavy snoring of one dead tired.

Here was Leif, then, calmly asleep. He was not too dead to lie there snoring, so that it could be heard a long way off.

In an instant Ingolf was there; he threw off his ski and began to excavate the snow with his bare hands. Leif in the horse's stomach was so covered with snow that no one could guess what this mound in the landscape really contained.

Ingolf took hold of a corner of the cloak and pulled. Leif did not follow it, as he had expected. The cloak came up empty, and only exposed Leif's legs to view. Leif was not interested in what was going on—he continued to lie there and snore. So Ingolf began to pull Leif's leg with all his might, and at last dragged him out. A hasty look in the hole showed him the ripped-up stomach of a horse. Leif opened a pair of sleep-drunken and astonished eyes, rose with a bound, looked closely at Ingolf and at the dog, gave a glance into the hole he had been hauled out from, shook off his stiffness, yawned, and began to rub his eyes, as though he wished to look more closely into the matter before he believed it.

Ingolf stood and stared at him without uttering a word. Leif looked dirty and bloody, but it was certainly not his own blood. He did not seem to have lost anything, and was at any rate alive. And how like Leif that was. He had at last rubbed his eyes well and was

awake. For a moment he sat with his eyes wide open and looked at Ingolf.

“Well, you have been home,” he blurted out in a voice that was hoarse and still a little sleepy. “Brought anything to eat?”

Then Ingolf sat down and laughed — laughed so that he had to hold his stomach with both hands — laughed so that at last he had to fall backwards, and rolled on one side. Leif looked at him, but his mental faculties were still a little benumbed by sleep. Then he, too, began to chuckle inwardly. When, a little while after, they had put on their ski, and were on the point of starting homeward, Leif stopped suddenly, and reflected. Then he looked Ingolf in the eyes and reached out his hand. He did not utter a word, but pressed his hand and looked straight in his eyes again. There was a slight quiver about his large mouth.

Then quickly they loosed each other's hands. And they started off home at full speed. They were as though born again, and did not feel weariness, cold, or hunger. By their side raced Ingolf's dog, his warm, bright red tongue hanging far out and his tail cheerfully erect.

So they sped along the way by the wood. Down the slopes above the house they went at a pelting pace. When at last they were at home in the courtyard, and had stowed away their ski in the outhouse, the dawn was beginning to break. No one was up yet. Noiselessly they crept to their beds. They did not feel bold enough to meet any one this morning. The best thing was to take refuge in sleep from all explanations.



## VI

Helga, though she had only lived for twelve winters, knew already a good deal of life. She knew what it was to be anxious for one whom she loved. Long before she was conscious of her love for Leif, she suffered all a lover's anxiety. Leif took her thoughts with him wherever he went and travelled. And she could never feel secure about him. She could, on the other hand, be sure that if she had not seen him for the space of a day, not to speak of the occasions when he was absent many days, that during that interval he had been once, or probably many times, near the border of the next world, and that it was at any rate only due to the incredible luck which always followed him that he came home with whole limbs.

She knew, in fact, the long days and still longer nights of waiting and anxiety. She knew what it was to lie awake most of the night and see terrible sights. She turned restlessly on her bed, and neither dared to close her eyes nor to stare into the darkness, because everywhere she encountered the figure of him she loved, either dead or dying. She had learnt to prize two things which a woman, who must generally miss and be anxious for him she loves, cannot live without — dreaming and work. She knew how small occupations shorten the day, and the relief won by showing love to animals, being kind to them, and lavishing kind words upon them, and she experienced the joy it gives to be loved by dumb creatures. It was known to her, also, how the way is made easy to the land of dreams, where the hours fly quickly,

by busying one's hands with needle and thread. When she sat making something ornamental for herself or small gifts for him, there were moments when she seemed to triumph over distance, and felt her friend so near that she suddenly let her hands sink, looked up, and was quite surprised that he was not standing behind her. Was it because she did not look up quickly enough? Just before, he *had* been standing there! Helga, with her twelve short winters, knew also happiness. There was the happiness of seeing Leif come home radiant, and hearing his dear, glad voice tell of great adventures. Leif always came across great adventures, so that his tongue nearly ran away with him. There was the joy of noticing that his eye always sought her first, and really only her. It was a joy that he never found rest when near her, except at her side, and that he could only be quiet and lose himself in dreams when she held his hand. It was a joy finally to see him forget everything, even herself, when he had some purpose in his head, or was bent upon going to some other place. Even the pain at seeing herself thus forgotten was mingled with the deepest feelings of joy. For that was just Leif's way. He came so near her by leaving her. She loved him exactly as he was, regardless of limits and without consideration. Because he was one of those whom no bond holds, it was such a happy thing to know that he was hers, when he only remembered it — hers and no one else's.

And, besides, she knew that she could not cease to love him. She was so completely convinced that though in knightly bravery and unbounded courage he might,

perhaps, have an equal, he could not have a superior. It was impossible for her to cease loving him.

Yes, Helga knew happiness. She knew what it was to love, and to feel herself beloved. She knew by experience how absence deepens and intensifies affection. She felt how her latent longing slowly grew, and was prepared to burst all bonds. She possessed in full measure woman's pure and unbounded devotion. Matured early as she was, Helga often reflected on the relation between Leif and her brother, Ingolf, which caused her distress. She was fond of her brother. Ingolf, though fundamentally different from Leif, was such that if she once had to leave him in order to follow Leif, she would not make Leif so complete and happy as she ungrudgingly wished him to be. Therefore the great difference in their characters caused her perpetual anxiety — an anxiety which flamed up anew whenever Leif and Ingolf became angry with each other, or even a little at variance. In her heart she accused them alternately — Ingolf, when his phlegmatic character irritated Leif; and Leif, when, by his hastiness and teasing, he provoked Ingolf. Neither Leif nor Ingolf had any suspicion of Helga's deep distress each time a trivial misunderstanding divided them for a short time. For Helga concealed her anxiety, and fought her battle in silence.

She was always on the watch for the fluctuations in their temperaments. She could always perceive when they had been at variance, even when they had been reconciled and had forgotten what had occurred, before they met her. When anything concerned them, she was as sensitive as a feather in the wind. And she did not

cease till she had examined the cause of their disagreement to the minutest detail, and cleared away the remnants of ill-humour which might still remain in one or both of their minds. They felt sometimes that it was a little tiresome, being called to account in this way. But they reconciled themselves to it, because both were so fond of her, and because she was wise, quiet, and impartial. They did not guess at all that she fought for her future happiness with a heart torn by anxiety, that her calm had been won by a severe struggle, that her seeming cool, wise impartiality was a screen behind which she concealed herself.

Helga was the only one who, to a certain extent, discovered the real circumstances connected with their journey over the heath. She was also the only one who discovered that they had separated, and separated in anger. Finally, she was the only one who obtained a truthful account of the slaughter of the horse.

Originally it was by no means their intention that she should find out anything of the matter. When Ingolf and Leif had slept uninterruptedly for twenty-four hours after their return from Gaulum, they woke the second night, towards morning, hungry and depressed, and began to examine the situation. They hastily agreed only to say that they had ridden over the heath, and up there had been obliged to kill their only horse, and for the rest to maintain an obstinate silence. If Orn and Rodmar were in the mood to punish them, they must submit; and, for the rest, ride out the storm as well as they could.

They had soon discovered that Orn and Rodmar had

more important things to think about. It was enough for them that the boys had returned home safe and sound. They told them, seriously, that it was not the custom of a man of honour to break a promise once given, and that, since they had done that, they could not yet be accounted men. That hurt their feelings rather, but had to be borne. Ingolf and Leif discovered once more that one escapes most cheaply when one has been most anxious. So lightly did their fathers deal with them.

With Helga it was another matter. She held on, and held on. For many days they fought manfully; they did not want to make her their confidante in the matter. But she was not to be shaken off. And at last there came the moment when their tongues were altogether loosed, and she got a full account, down to the minutest details.

It happened in the following way. Their plan of defence had been to take care that neither should be alone with her. For many days it had been impossible for her to find them in a remote spot; not once had she succeeded in getting one of them alone. When she saw that it was not a fair fight, she had recourse to stratagem. She kept silence for a few days, and they immediately became less vigilant. Then she brought out some wild apples which she had kept since the preceding summer. She made them believe that she had seen her chance to snatch them. The apples smelt delicious. Leif and Ingolf were immediately willing to share the supposed stolen goods with her. So she succeeded in luring them into her ambush — an outhouse

where they could eat them quietly. She let them bolt the door carefully, so that they should not run the risk of being surprised. She took her seat on the edge of a sledge, and let the boys sit, one on each side of her. And then she spoke in a way to cut off all evasions, and made it impossible for them to be silent any longer. Too late they discovered that they had been caught in a trap.

Embarrassed and unhappy, they began their confession. With red faces and downcast eyes, they related brokenly and alternately what had happened between them on the heath in the evening and the night. Each of them accused himself and excused the other. But Helga, who listened with more than her ears only, became quite clear in her mind regarding what had happened.

Quite still she sat with bowed head, and let them tell their narrative. When they had finished and were silent, she still remained still, without moving or speaking a word. At last her silence seemed so strange to Leif that he lifted his head and looked at her in alarm. And what he saw increased his fear. She sat there by his side with her face white and, as it were, sunk in. Her eyes stared straight before her, her mouth was firmly closed, and tears trickled from her despairing eyes and ran down over her pale face. Leif felt an icy chill run through his whole body which made him shudder. This drew Ingolf's attention, and he also looked up. He had never seen his sister look like that; immediately he seized one of her hands. It was ice-cold, and remained passive in his.

Tears came to Leif's eyes, and he sat there inwardly helpless. It was not possible for him to bring out a word. He found nothing to say, and simply dared not open his mouth, for he was on the point of weeping.

Ingolf was the first to speak. He pressed his sister's limp hand, shook her arm cheerfully, and said: "You must not be so sad about that, Helga. We have forgotten it now. And each of us has certainly vowed in his heart that it shall never happen again."

Helga opened her mouth to answer him, but her tongue would not obey her. She had to struggle hard to control her emotion. When she had waited a little, she at last began to speak. "That is just it," she said, with a broken voice. "It always gets worse and worse with you — always more dangerous. When you are grown, you will not so easily get over it, nor so easily be reconciled afterwards. Perhaps you will even fight each other. Perhaps some day one of you will kill the other. If things go on like this, there will at last be hatred between you. And what shall I do?"

Ingolf and Leif sat and felt very uncomfortable. Both saw for once the relation between them with her eyes. She was right. Things were growing continually worse. It was no use to shut their eyes to the danger. The next time they fell out, it might be under such circumstances as would not admit of their being reconciled again. They had not been far from that this last time.

Ingolf was the first who found firm ground in his thoughts. A secret purpose was suddenly quickened in him. Hurriedly he rose and reached out his hand

to Leif. "Leif, will you be my sworn brother?" he asked quietly, and there was in his voice and bearing that adult composure which made him at times seem older than he was.

Leif sprang up and took his hand. He could not bring out a word, but gripped hard. Helga remained sitting and looked from one to the other. Then she rose slowly, laid her hands over theirs, and gave each of them a kiss. "Now you are both my brothers," she said, and looked at the same time at Leif. Her look made Leif understand that he was more than a brother. He turned red, and smiled in an embarrassed way. He had the habit of blushing easily. His embarrassed smile was very charming.

They had forgotten the apples. Now they were produced, and helped them over the slight embarrassment which followed on their extreme seriousness. Gradually Leif and Helga talked fluently. Ingolf, on the other hand, did not say much. He sat and took a secret oath that henceforth he would be a man, and no overhastiness of temper should master him. Nothing should by any means divide him from Leif or Helga. Now he and Leif were actually brothers, and Leif and Helga would hold by each other, he knew. Seldom had he felt so happy as at this moment. Quite unconsciously he sat and enjoyed his sense of strength and quiet. He continued so to sit till Helga roused him with a question. Thus they talked easily and enjoyed being together. When they separated, they had agreed that the solemn ceremony of initiation into blood-brotherhood should take place in the spring at the great festival which was to be held at the chief temple at Gaulum.



## VII

Orn and Rodmar were able to make the winter pass. They sat most days and every evening on the high-seat, drank beer, and enjoyed each other's society.

From the north came rumours of disturbance. There was still peace and no danger in Dalsfjord and its neighbourhood. But it was best to be prepared for everything.

Now that Halvdan the Black was dead, and his son, Harald, made King, though but ten years old, there were several kings and chiefs who suddenly conceived a desire for the kingdom which Halvdan the Black had established. It was rumoured that Harald and his uncle, Guttorm, who was to be regent during the two years remaining of Harald's minority, had already gone out to meet the disturbers of peace.

When Orn and Rodmar heard of it, they remembered the exploits of their youth. The latter had not lost anything by being related through many years. Listeners obtained the impression that Orn and Rodmar had been present at the most important events of the world, and decided their issue. And it was not only men whom they had encountered. They had met evil and hidden powers in manifold forms. And here they sat after all.

Orn and Rodmar were reasonable men, who spoke in moderation. When one had spoken, he gladly let the other have his turn. And while the one who was silent played the part of an attentive hearer, his look became

absent, he thought of fresh exploits, brought them forth, and arranged them in his mind. Then when the other at last was silent he was fully prepared. But first he nodded courteously and said, "Yes! Yes!" very thoughtfully, and still kept silence for a moment to show that he had been following. Then all at once he became an active narrator. "But now here!"

The servants in the hall were amused, but not in any unbecoming way. They winked at each other when the old men did not see it. They did not grudge the old men their reminiscences, and partly believed them. But they were amused.

And Orn and Rodmar showed a startling faculty at their age in discovering how to outdo each other's tales.

When they had bragged their best, they went to the temple and offered their fattest animals to the gods, feasted in their honour, and gave them gifts. They did not feel quite sure whether the gods allowed so much pride. And one should not offend the gods, but keep on good terms with them.

Thus the days passed for Orn and Rodmar. They grew old, sitting in the high-seat and drinking beer. They drank much beer.

## VIII

One morning, shortly after Ingolf had offered Leif blood-brotherhood, they went to their fathers to tell them, and ask their permission for the ceremony to take place at the feast at Gaulum the first day of summer.

Leif found his father in bed. When he had spoken, Rodmar praised his luck in strong language, added that he had always had better fortune than he deserved, further remarked that on the rare occasions that he caused his father joy it was always without any merit of his own, and bade him go his way and leave him, Rodmar, to his beer.

Orn was sitting in the high-seat, slaking his morning thirst, when Ingolf came before him and asked permission to speak. Orn granted it with a nod of his white-haired head. The slightly absent look did not disappear from his face; he listened without moving to what his son had to say. When Ingolf had spoken, Orn remained sitting silent. Ingolf was not sure whether he had heard what he had said or not. It was easy to see that he sat in deep reflection. Ingolf remained standing for a time, waiting for an answer. When he saw that it was in vain, and that his father had probably forgotten that he stood there, he silently departed.

Orn did not touch his drinking-horn again that day. He busied himself with his thoughts, and was taciturn. Long before his usual time he sought his couch. Early next morning he summoned Ingolf curtly and bade him follow him. He led him to an outhouse where the tools of the house were kept, and bolted the door carefully. Then he took his seat on a chopping-block in the middle of the floor and sat silent. Ingolf stood before him, awaiting what he had to say, and carefully restraining his impatience.

“Sit down,” said Orn at last thoughtfully.

Ingolf sat down on some lumber which had been piled

up against the main wall. So they remained sitting a considerable time. Orn was long in commencing. "You have told me," he began at last, speaking very slowly and with constant pauses, "that you intend to enter into blood-brotherhood with your cousin, Leif. I must presume that you are acquainted with duties of blood-brotherhood, and have carefully considered the matter, and also that you have not let yourself be surprised into talking rash vows, or have followed your feelings alone without consulting your understanding. I will not disguise from you that I could have wished a better brother for you in this. And I leave it to your discretion whether the circle of your brotherhood should not be extended so as also to include Atle Jarl's sons. On many grounds I have been led to understand that these young men, especially Haasten, would not be unwilling to exchange the bond of friendship for that of brotherhood. It needs but a word on your part, perhaps only a hint. My opinion is that you would stand stronger alone than with Leif as your sworn brother. You ought to be intelligent enough yourself to perceive that. But the three would balance Leif, and more than that. You would stand stronger afterwards, especially if another tie subsequently should unite us to Atle's sons, which I do not regard as impossible. For the rest, Leif is certainly our kinsman. We should therefore look after him, and perhaps he is best bound in that way. I do not wish to say more about the matter."

Orn was silent for a long time. Presently he resumed. "I feel I am growing old. The days depart and do not return to me. They seem, as it were, to go a very little

way, and there is nothing to hold fast to in them; they slip through my hands."

He coughed, reflected, and began again. "Therefore I have considered that perhaps it would be best if I were to make over to you our property to manage. It will be good for you to be early accustomed to command people and to bear responsibility. And you are certainly a child no longer. I will therefore gladly see, before I die, how you prosper when you manage by yourself. For the rest, I leave matters without anxiety to you, and I shall be at hand, and can be useful. I will also advise Rodmar to do the same for Leif. Your task will certainly be increased by that, for you will have to look after your kinsman, at any rate at first. But since you wish to enter into brotherhood with him, you must bear the consequences. There is no more to be said about it at present. We must have time to prepare the matter, and can return to it later. There was also another thing I wished to speak to you about today."

Orn was silent and reflected. Then he commenced again hesitatingly, not without a certain embarrassment. "I often heard in her time your mother speaking with you. It is now long since, and you were little at the time. Probably you have forgotten some of what she said. But I have noticed that you have remembered part of it — perhaps you remember every word. I have never spoken to you of your mother. You have never given occasion for it, and one should not talk too much. When one talks too much, words easily become mere wind. Therefore I have never hitherto spoken with you about something, of which, however, I wish to speak with

you — not because I believe it necessary — perhaps you are already as clear on the matter as myself — but because I want you to remember that I have spoken to you. The fact that I cannot well postpone it has also determined me to speak now.

“ You know that Odin and Thor are especially my gods. They have been the gods of our family as far back as tradition goes, and I want you, like your forefathers, to hold them especially in honour. If you do that, it will go well with you. For wisdom and strength are the two things a man must have. If he has them, he has honour too, in Valhalla as well as here upon earth. Goods and gold, power over men, and great possessions are good things, which you should strive to acquire, and hold fast when you have them. But all those things can, in case of need, be dispensed with. Honour is the one indispensable thing, because, after all, it is the only thing that uplifts a man, and the only thing that survives him on earth, when he is dead and done with. And because honour can be lost during a man’s lifetime, a dead man with honour preserved is happier than the man who is still alive, and whose honour is exposed to peril. It is not necessary to impress upon you anything else than that; when your honour is concerned, you must be prepared to stake your life. The memory of a man outlives him. And honour casts a glory over a man’s memory, just as dishonour casts a shadow. No man in our family has a shadow on his memory. This is the most important thing which I wish to say to you. But if you have the patience to hear me, I have something more to say. And that is this. You shall

respect your land's law and justice, for as long as you have not renounced its law, you are bound by it, and dishonour yourself by breaking it. You shall not stir up unnecessary quarrels, but avoid disunion and strife, as long as your honour is not injured. Peace in the land produces fruitful fields. But if you have a lawful vengeance to inflict, do so with a heavy hand, as behoves one born to such a place as yours. But be always ready for reconciliation when it is offered sincerely. An honourable reconciliation is preferable to a victory which may carry in it the seed of future defeat.

“And never break a treaty, for only a wretch ignores his vows, only a traitor breaks his word. A brave man is prepared to support his least word with his life, thereby the high-born are recognized. The churl, on the other hand, regards his word as nothing more than the breath of his mouth. His tongue shall be eaten of snakes, and his evil memory will ride his soul like a nightmare for ever.”

Orn had become excited. Then he was silent, composed himself again, meditated, and was still.

When he had finished meditating, he rose solemnly and drew from his arm a heavy gold bracelet graven with runes and signs. Ingolf sprang up when his father rose, and remained standing before him with bowed head, and his bright face slightly flushed.

Orn spoke: “This bracelet has for a long time belonged to our race, and has always been an heirloom in the head branch of the family. Some of those who bore it have worn it till their death. Others have transferred it to the future wearer when they found that their

time was near. My son, I am growing old, and it is no use to deny it or to hide it. Forgetfulness is getting more and more the mastery over me. Reach me your hand."

Ingolf stretched out his right hand, and raised his head. There was a moist glimmer in his eyes. Deeply moved, Orn drew the bracelet on his arm. "Now you wear the ring."

Ingolf fell on his knees before the old man, and Orn made the sign of the Hammer over his head, and said quietly: "Odin give you wisdom, and Thor strength. Frey make your land fruitful, and Njord guide your seafaring! All the bright Ases help thee! Rise, my son."

Ingolf rose silently. Orn laid his hands on his shoulders, looked for a moment closely at him, and let him go. They went out into the courtyard of the house. For a while they stood there silent, side by side, and looked out over the landscape where the snow-covered mountains rose and the valleys sank. Ingolf saw everything, as it were, with new eyes. The fjord was such a crystal blue, and seemed to have something to say to him. The dark edge of the wood, which he caught a glimpse of here and there, held today a secret and certain promise of the spring and the snow-free earth. The sky was high and clear, and the day had a solemn stillness about it. The frost in the air seemed to be relaxing. In Ingolf's eyes the whole scene wore a solemn aspect, and seemed in a way newborn. Even the low houses with snow-covered roofs seemed to have altered their appearance, and looked twice as home-like.



When Orn went in, Ingolf remained standing there, and enjoyed the freshness of the day.

Orn went straight in to the high-seat and his drinking-horn. His throat had become dry from much talk. He emptied the horn in a moment and had it filled afresh. He emptied the horn many times that day.

## IX

Ingolf informed Leif in carefully-chosen words that his father would be glad if they extended the proposed brotherhood so as to include the sons of Atle. Leif stood looking down while Ingolf talked. As soon as Ingolf had spoken the first word, he felt sorry that he had brought the question up at all. Leif's attitude had an effect on him. He stood and fumbled with words which would not arrange themselves properly.

When he finished, Leif looked up askance at him. He did not say much at first.

Ingolf felt a profound and unusual depression. He felt as if he had in some degree deceived Leif. "I only wished to tell you that," he tried to add, but was quite sure that his voice did not sound convincing.

"What do you think yourself?" asked Leif at last quietly, and looked up again, still with a rather unsteady glance.

"I have never thought about brotherhood with Atle's sons," answered Ingolf quietly, suddenly recovering his equilibrium. "I have offered you brotherhood with myself alone, and am therefore prevented from forming

brotherhood with another. But I understand from what my father said that there perhaps was a possibility that Atle's sons would like to enter into brotherhood with us. And in such a case I would like to know your opinion beforehand."

"I have never contemplated forming brotherhood with Holmsten," answered Leif in a quiet, firm voice, quite different from his usual one. "In fact, I do not choose to be everybody's brother."

"Well, let us say no more about it." Ingolf tried to speak lightly.

But Leif continued. There was a tremor of swelling wrath and distress in his quiet voice. "I understand well that for you a brotherhood with Atle's sons is quite a different thing from brotherhood with me. By entering into the blood-tie with them you gain power and consideration. Do you enter *alone* into brotherhood with Atle Jarl's sons; I will not stand in the way. I release you from your word. I am able to stand alone."

Ingolf paused a little and then said: "You misunderstand me, Leif. I only want to bring the matter before you. It is possible that I should not have done that. But I took for granted that we might already talk together like brothers. I will gladly confess that, for my part, I might think it good to enter into brotherhood with Atle's sons — yes, I should even like to have Haasten for a brother. But I could not think of entering into any brotherhood without you. There is no one else whom I would rather be brother to, and that you know well, or ought to know. No power could induce me to release *you* from your word, Leif."

Leif stood thoughtful awhile. Then he raised his head and looked in Ingolf's eyes with a firm and trustful look. "I know well," he said in the same quiet tone, "that I am not the best brother you could have. But you shall never have reason to find fault with my faithfulness. I imagine, Ingolf, that you are afraid that I shall some day be the cause of enmity between you and Atle's sons. With my good will that shall not happen. My temper shall never again get the mastery of me before Holmsten. That I swear to you. I know that you like Holmsten, and that you wish to preserve that friendship. You shall see that you can trust me."

The two cousins pressed each other's hands in silence. They referred no more to the matter.

## X

There came a beggar to the house: an old bent man, clothed in dirty rags and torn leather, entered the hall one evening and took a place by the fire on the outermost bench. There he sat and warmed his crooked fingers, that were blue with cold, and meanwhile squinted about him with pale, cunning eyes. As he sat there, his yellow beard, in which a quantity of nondescript rubbish had been caught, hung down between his legs. His grey hair lay in tatters over his back. But his powerful eyebrows were the most marked feature in his face. Grey and bushy, they almost concealed his eyes when they were lowered, and he had a habit sometimes of drawing them both up together and slightly lifting

one at a time, which gave his face a strangely mobile, almost animal, expression.

He was questioned regarding news from the north, but had little information to give. As soon as it was evident that he had nothing important to communicate, he was allowed to sit in peace and warm himself. It seemed as if he valued being left to himself. When he had sat for a while and warmed his hands, he loosed the rags from off his legs and stretched his feet to the fire. They were a marvel of knotted bones and dirt. He looked exhausted. Some remains of the evening meal were brought him. He received the food with a grunt, set it upon his knee, and began eating. With eager hands he first sought the best bits, and, groping about in the food, turned the contents of the dish round, chewing with his whole head. He certainly could eat.

Ingolf and Leif had sought a place near him, and sat looking attentively at him.

“I think he can hold as much in his maw as a cow,” whispered Leif, absorbed in looking at him. “And he mumbles just like a cow chewing the cud. Ha! Ha! what an old swine he is!”

The beggar emptied the dish so that only bare bones remained. Then he gulped comfortably and relieved himself of air. Subsequently he fell into a cosy nap while he digested. Thus he sat for some time, apparently sound asleep. But suddenly he raised his eyebrows both together and peered round him with wide-open pale eyes.

Ingolf and Leif had come near to him, and were contemplating him closely — one his legs, and the other

his face. They had seldom seen anything like him. He was certainly a remarkable object both above and below. He sat for a time and looked at them without saying anything, looked from one to the other, contemplated them closely, and gave himself plenty of time.

“Point and sword,” he said at last in a deep bass tone. “When the point breaks, exploits are over. . . . But you sit where you should.” He turned suddenly to Ingolf and thrust his face with his wide-opened eyes close to his. Then he drew his head back, murmuring in a deep tone, as though at his own thoughts. The boys believed at first that he talked in delirium. They sat still and only stared at him — Leif with his mouth half open. “A curious creature!” he thought, and felt internally much amused.

The old man remained still for some time, looking closely and a little cunningly from one to the other. Their staring did not seem to affect him. “Shall I tell you something?” he asked at last, growling, and winking meaningly with his pale eyes. “Shall I tell you about the new land?”

He turned his face with his eyebrows elevated, questioning, and turning abruptly from one to the other.

In the face of such a direct application from this queer figure, the boys became at first a little embarrassed. They looked at each other, and remained sitting with bowed heads and fumbling fingers.

“Well, if you don’t choose to hear it, I don’t choose to tell you,” growled the old grumbler, shook himself, let his eyebrows sink, and withdrew into himself. The boys lifted their heads, looked at him and at each other, and

suddenly became curious. Ingolf nodded to Leif to commence, and Leif blurted out: "Let us hear, old man!"

The beggar slowly lifted his eyebrows, but not in order to look at them. It seemed as if he had forgotten them, and did not hear what Leif said. He sat staring in front of him into the fire with an absent look in his old, strangely bleached eyes.

"Yes, yes," he said at last, as if half unwillingly. "Anyhow, it is all the same to me. Why should I tell you about it? No one escapes his destiny."

With a loud and luxurious yawn he showed them an enormous throat behind his yellow teeth. Then he closed his chaps and remained sitting silent for a time. It seemed as though he were considering whether he wanted to open his mouth at all again that evening.

Leif found this tedious, and summoned up his courage. "It was about the new land you were going to tell us," he said persuasively. And when the old man did not hear him he added inquiringly, in order, if possible, to rouse him out of his silent reverie: "Has a new land been discovered?"

"Don't you know that?" asked the old man hastily. "Don't you even know that?" he repeated incredulously. The boys shook their heads negatively. "Then it is not too early you come to know that, if one told you. So you do not even know that. Ah, old Norns! How you can spin. You look after the loom without wavering even when the motley yarn is blood-coloured. Perhaps the one who sees should be silent.

No, some time you will *have* to know it. Have you never heard of the new land?"

After a repeated shake of the head on the part of the two boys, he continued: "One late summer, some years back, Naddod the Viking intended to sail from Norway to the Faroe Islands. But the gods granted him no good wind, either because he had neglected to sacrifice, or in some other way incurred the displeasure of Odin and Njord. They sent him a storm, and drove him so far westward that at last he believed he was near Ginnungagab, where the seas pour down into Helheim, but instead of this he came to a great land. He ascended a high mountain to see if he could find a sign that the land was inhabited. But no smoke was to be seen anywhere, nor any other sign of folk did he find. When he sailed from the country again, much snow had fallen on the mountains. Therefore he called the country Snowland. He and his people said that it was a good land. So some years passed without anything more being heard of the new country. There was a Swede, named Gardar Svavarsson, who had possessions in Denmark, who sailed from Sealand to fetch his wife's inheritance in the south. When he had sailed through Pettlandsfjord, he encountered a storm and went adrift. So he drifted to the west and came to the new land. He sailed farther along its coasts, and discovered that it was an island. He built a house by a bay which he called Husevig, and wintered there. When he sailed from the land the next spring the wind tore a boat, which he had in tow, loose. In the boat

was a serf named Natfare and a serf-woman. Perhaps they managed to effect a landing and settled in the place. Gardar praised the country much. He reported that it was wooded from the heath to the sea, and had luxuriant pastures. He gave it the name Gardarsholme. It retained the name between man and man until Floke Vilgerdsson had been there. Floke, who was a powerful Viking, equipped a ship in Rogaland to seek Gardarsholme. He loaded his ship in Smorsund. Before he sailed, he arranged a sacrificial feast, at which he sacrificed and conjured magic powers into three ravens. Therefore he has since been called 'Raven-Floke.' A sea-mark was raised where the feast had taken place, and was called 'Floke's Sea-mark.' It stood on the border between Hordaland and Rogaland. First Raven-Floke sailed to Hjaltland and cast anchor in a bay which was named Floke's Bay. At Hjaltland his daughter, Geirhild, was drowned in a lake, since called Geirhild's Lake. From Hjaltland he sailed to the Faroe Islands, where he gave one of his daughters in marriage. Thence he put out to sea, taking the three ravens with him. When he had sailed for a day and a night, he let the first raven loose. It flew astern and disappeared in the direction from which they had come. Then he sailed for a day and a night more, and let the second raven loose. It flew aloft and returned to the ship. Again he sailed a day and a night, and let the third raven go. It flew forward and did not return. When they sailed farther in the direction in which it had disappeared, they found the land they sought. Floke had on board a man named



Faxe. When they came to a broad fjord, Faxe spoke and said: 'This is certainly a great land we have found — here are mighty rivers.' Therefore the fjord was named 'Faxe-mouth.' Raven-Floke did not sail into the fjord. He sailed past a headland with a mighty snow-covered mountain on it, and across a broad bay with many islands and skerries. He landed at a fjord on the north side of the bay, which he called Vandfjord, and the coast-line he called Bardestrand. The fjord was full of fish. They were so absorbed in catching the quantities of fish that they forgot to procure hay; therefore the sheep and cattle they had brought with them died in the winter from want of fodder. The spring was fairly cold. Floke ascended a high mountain one day in spring and saw north of it a fjord packed full with sea-ice. Therefore he christened the land and named it Iceland. He meant to have sailed away that summer, but before they were ready to sail it was autumn, and the weather became stormy. Floke had on his ship two peasants, Thorolf and Haerjolf. When they were at the last ready to sail, the storm tore away a boat from them, and in the boat sat Haerjolf. Haerjolf landed at a place, to which he gave his name and called it Haerjolf's Haven. Raven-Floke, who did not wish to sail without Haerjolf, put back to land and brought his ship uninjured into a fjord which he called Havnefjord. At a river's mouth in the fjord they found a whale driven on shore. Haerjolf had also scented the whale, and there they met. They called the river's mouth Hvalore. They sailed thence and wintered in a fjord, on which Raven-Floke,

who had had enough of the land, did not choose to lavish a name. When, on their arrival home, they were asked about the new land, Floke had only evil to report. Haerjolf, on the other hand, praised it moderately, mentioned its advantages, and did not conceal its defects. But Thorolf declared that butter dripped from every straw in the land, therefore he was afterwards called 'Butter-Thorolf.'

"And I have no more to tell you about the new land," concluded the beggar rather suddenly, and shook himself uncomfortably—"you can yourselves go and see it."

When he stopped speaking, Ingolf and Leif sat for a time and stared at him. "Why should we do that?" asked Ingolf at last. "We have no mind to change our abode."

The old man returned no answer. Leif sat thoughtful. When he spoke at last his voice was muffled and seemed far away. "It would be amusing to see that land for once."

"You *will* see it," growled the old man, and there was a peculiar malicious exultation in his harsh voice—"you will have time enough to see it, I think." Suddenly life came into him afresh, and his voice became sharp and obtrusive. "Get me a jug of beer, and I will tell you much more; I will show you a piece of the Norns' web, hoho! A charming piece. They have twisted threads that you can never guess. Bring me beer, and you shall hear something."

Ingolf felt overcome by a strange and unusual bodily depression, and rose hastily. His spirits were suddenly

upset, and he felt almost ill. "Beer you shall have," he answered curtly and coldly. "But now I think we have heard enough for the evening. Come, Leif."

Leif rose a little unwillingly. It was possible that the old man had more information to give about the new land. Why not hear him to the end, even if he did talk some nonsense between whiles? But as Ingolf did not wish it, it was all the same to him. He could himself speculate further about the island out there in the garden, and go into the whole matter more closely with Ingolf.

The beggar had a jug of beer brought, which he emptied in small draughts in order to relish it better. Then he lay down by the fire, curled himself into a bundle, and slept. He remained lying there for the night; the next morning he wandered farther. When Leif sought him, in order to question him more closely, he had gone. Leif tried to talk with Ingolf about the new land. But Ingolf was always occupied with something else when Leif began to talk about Iceland. Leif did not observe that Ingolf with deliberate intention avoided the subject.

Ingolf could not free himself from a certain anxiety that Leif might become too interested in the new discovery which the beggar had reported to them. It would be like Leif suddenly to begin to make plans to go there, perhaps migrate and settle there. That must not happen, for Leif became unstable when he had conceived an idea, especially if it were rather an unusual one. No, Ingolf wished to remain in Dalsfjord, in his father's house. He was strongly averse from every-

thing which smacked of wandering and adventure. By his prudent methods he soon brought Leif to forget the new land.

## XI

The winter was nearing its end. After Goi came Enemaaned, and then, in the midst of spring, a fine Thursday ushered in Harpe, the first month of summer.

On the first summer day there was held in this part of the land a great sacrificial feast at Gaulum, which lasted three days and nights. On that occasion there assembled, at the residence of the Jarl, chiefs and yeomen from distant parts, each bringing for himself some food and a large quantity of beer. Especially was it obligatory on those who were preparing Viking expeditions for the summer not to remain away, if they wished for honour and victory in their undertaking.

From the early morning the place began to be alive. Great crowds were seen gathering from all sides. The sun was reflected from new-polished weapons, and shone on parti-coloured shields. The house-servants were for the most part dressed in suits of grey home-spun frieze, but the peasants and their sons appeared in splendid foreign-made clothes. Red, blue, green, and parti-coloured chequered cloaks were seen in each company.

All day people continued to assemble at the house. The days passed in putting up tents, preparing for the festival, seeking out friends and acquaintances, making appointments for the summer, and settling various

accounts. Atle Jarl was invisible that day. Only his closest friends, and people who sought him on important business, were taken to the room where he had hid himself, busily absorbed as he was in arranging or preparing arrangements for his own and others' affairs.

Among those who sought him that day and had audience of him was Orn Bjornulfsson. Their conversation was quite short, and resulted in Atle Jarl sending for his eldest son, Haasten. Haasten was only for a moment in the room with his father. His brothers, Haersten and Holmsten, waited meanwhile outside. Haasten told them nothing about his conversation with his father. And when Haasten did not speak of his own accord, his brothers did not question him. Haasten, Haersten, and Holmsten went about and bade every newly arrived chief welcome. They wore splendid clothes, and carried valuable weapons and ornaments. Over his shoulders each of the brothers wore a long cloak of heavy silk — Haasten a red one, Haersten a blue one, and Holmsten a green one.

They were all three fine-looking youths, tall and well-built, fair-haired, with noble features and quiet demeanour. As they went about bidding the guests welcome, side by side, Haasten on the right and Holmsten on the left, few remembered having seen three such fine-looking fellows together. They were very popular; very many sought their friendship, but few won their confidence.

Among these few were Ingolf and Leif. Haasten made no attempt to conceal his gladness when he greeted the two cousins. Ingolf was the special object of his warm friendship. He included Leif because he was once

for all inseparable from his cousin, and because in spite of everything he liked him, and silently admired him for his courage.

Walking slowly, the three brothers turned back to the place where Ingolf and Leif were superintending the erection of tents, but their fathers had already disappeared. They had found a place of honour in the hall, where individual guests were received. There they sat, tasted the brewing of the house, and compared notes on the latest news with like-minded friends.

Ingolf observed at last that Haasten especially wanted something with him that day, and accordingly arranged that they should be alone for a while. Haasten went straight to the point. "I hear, Ingolf, that you and Leif will tomorrow enter brotherhood. I have expected that some time it would come to that, but it is happening somewhat sooner than I had expected."

Ingolf interrupted him, though he well understood that he had not finished what he had to say. He told Haasten briefly, but without concealing anything, about their journey home after their last visit to Gaulum. He hinted that Leif and he certainly were both anxious to enter into an unbreakable bond.

"You know Leif," he concluded. "You know how imprudent he is, and how he needs protection. The shield that shall protect him will receive dints. But a shield he must have, and that shield I will be."

"Do you think that it would be of use if Leif at the same time obtained other shields?" Haasten asked quietly. Ingolf grew a little pale, a fact which did not escape Haasten. For a while they stood and looked into

each other's eyes. There was a strange silence between them. Both felt that now their destinies were being settled. At last Ingolf reached Haasten his hand. "Haasten, my friend," he said in a low voice, "I hope that *we* will always stand side by side where the word of friendship sounds as well as where weapons speak. But I think Leif would feel a defence of shields as a prison."

Haasten remained standing quite still with his friend's hand in his, and looked into his eyes. Both had a troubled look. Then Haasten said quietly: "You have spoken, and it cannot well be otherwise. Let us each for himself keep a good watch on our brothers. I have a sure foreboding that it will be needed." He gave Ingolf's hand a final pressure and released it. Silently they returned to the tents where Leif stood engaged in friendly and cheerful conversation with Haasten's brothers. Leif had produced the knife which Holmsten gave him, and was showing with gestures and much hilarity how he had succeeded in killing the horse.

"The belt is paid for, Holmsten," he concluded cheerfully. "Your knife, which once should have taken my life, has saved it. If you have an ax, hew at me and make me a present of it afterwards. I need an ax; my father will not give me one. He fears I might test its usefulness a little too much. I have tried to steal one from him. But he has locked the weapons up in a chest which I cannot open."

Leif stopped when Ingolf and Haasten came up. A hasty glance convinced him that something had taken place between the two. They were very quiet. He thrust the knife noisily into its sheath, and involuntarily

straightened his body from its careless attitude. Soon after, Haasten and his brothers withdrew. Haasten went straight to his father. "Is the matter arranged?" asked Atle Jarl. "No, I have been considering it," answered Haasten, who did not wish to give his father full information. "I fear that brotherhood with Leif Rodmarsson will cause us too many difficulties."

"Very possibly," answered Atle. "But Ingolf is a good fellow, and will inherit much property. His family has many friends, and will be a good support in disturbed times."

"My friendship with the cousins is independent of their entering brotherhood."

"Perhaps," answered the Jarl dryly. "You are in any case master over your proceedings. My advice was only advice. May you never regret not having followed it."

Haasten, who saw that his father was angry, did not answer, but saluted him respectfully and retired. He was depressed and filled with heavy forebodings, but tried to conceal it as much as possible.

The day began to decline. Atle Jarl had taken measures, and all the arrangements for the feast were ready. The animals destined for sacrifice were not allowed out at all that day. The fine, powerful horses which were to be offered to Odin stood stamping their hoofs impatiently in the stables. A flock of sheep, likewise meant to appease the All-Father, pressed against one another, patiently resigned to their fate, in a pen, rested their heads on each other's backs, and chewed the



cut over the last remains of the contents of their stomachs, now and then shaking their ears a little discontentedly. Plump oxen and bulls which, with one exception, should soon bleed in honour of Odin, bellowed in all kinds of tones and butted against the beams of the stalls. In an outhouse lay nine serfs and criminals with their hands tied behind them. They were to be hung in order to join the storm-god's wild hunt. That day it was chiefly Odin who received offerings. But there was also a little diversion destined for Thor. Away in a corner of the outhouse, where the serfs waited for the rope, lay a ragged bundle. It was the serf-woman, Trude, who had been guilty of stealing, and who, as she must somehow say good-bye to life, might as well be utilized as an offering to Thor the Thunderer. When the pale twilight of the evening had drawn its light veil over the landscape, softened its sharp outlines and changed them to vague, shadowy contours, people began to gather round the temple. All their weapons they had left under guard in their tents.

The temple at Gaulum was an old chief temple built long before the house became a Jarl's seat. The dignity of high priest had from time immemorial descended from father to son, and Atle Jarl the Slender had thus inherited it. The temple was a large and spacious edifice, built of heavy beams, with its entrance by a main-wall furnished with gables. Burning and smoking pitch-torches hung fixed in heavy iron rings on the walls, each watched by a serf. On entering, one perceived in this flickering light only indistinct images of gods who sat on their platforms behind a low partition-

wall away at the opposite end of the temple. Within the wall no ordinary person ventured to tread; only the priest and his consecrated assistants, helpers in the sacrifice, might go there. The gods sat arranged in a spacious semicircle. There were several of them, both male and female. Most were splendidly dressed, some even adorned with gold rings and precious stones. But the three chief gods, Odin, Thor, and Frey, who sat in the midst of the semicircle, drew the spectator's chief attention. In the centre was enthroned Thor — here, as in many other places in Norway, the chief object of worship. Thor sat in his thunder-chariot, to which were yoked painted goats with gilded horns. The goats were on wheels, as though on the point of drawing the chariot from its place in the chief procession at Thor's festivals. In his right hand Thor held his short-handled hammer high uplifted. He had an awe-inspiring aspect. Straight in front of him was a thin slab of rock with a sharp upper edge, placed edgewise.

On the right of Thor sat Odin in a waggon, both larger and more magnificent than Thor's, but without animals to draw it. Odin sat on a chair adorned with runes and sacred signs. He held a long spear in his hand, and stared threateningly with his one eye.

On the left of Thor sat Frey. His platform was a great stone, covered with a parti-coloured carpet. In contrast to the other gods he sat naked, holding a stag's horn, his only weapon, high in his right hand.

In the midst of the semicircular space, on a special elevation, stood a great stone basin in which the blood of

the offerings was collected. In the bowl lay a rod, used to stir the blood and then to sprinkle it around. On the mound lay, besides, the Sacred Bracelet, a heavy, open circlet of gold, inscribed with sacred signs, on which all oaths were taken.

When the people had assembled in the temple, Atle Jarl the Slender entered, followed by his assistants. He wore white clothes with red borders. His assistants were also dressed in white.

When Atle Jarl entered, carrying a broad-bladed, long-handled ax over his shoulder, taller by head and shoulders than most of those present, thin and erect like the branch-lopped stem of a fir, he caused a gasp in many a young breast, and even old, hardened Vikings felt a slight shudder in their backs. This man stood at that moment in covenant with the gods. They were brought into touch with the Unknowable. There was a death-like silence in the temple.

Atle Jarl walked with dignity between the thick-packed masses of men on both sides. At the partition-wall his assistants remained standing for a while; only the priest could go within. He placed the ax on the mound where the basin stood. He saluted the three chief gods with a slow and solemn bending of the knee before each, and then included the other gods in one. Then he went back muttering secret words, took the sacrificial bracelet from its place, and drew it on his right arm, seized the ax with his left hand, and raised his right arm in command. That was a signal to the door-guard.

The most splendid of all the sacrificial animals, a

coal-black ox with shining head and large, crooked horns, was brought in by serfs, and led to the partition-wall by other serfs, chosen as sacrificial helpers, and consecrated to the service. At the same time two of the priest's assistants came forward, lifted the bowl from the mound, and placed it a little way off. The ox resisted violently when led in, and uttered angry bellowings. It foamed with frenzy, and showed the whites of its eyes.

Atle Jarl stood with his left foot advanced and his ax lifted in both hands. At the instant the ox was placed in the proper spot the ax fell with a powerful and practised aim on its neck. The beast gave a bellow and sank on its knees. Immediately the serfs stood over it with long knives. A stab in the neck and a cut between the neck arteries, and then down with it to the basin, so that the precious sacrificial blood should not be spilt. Meanwhile, one of the assistants kept stirring the blood in the bowl with a rod so that it should not coagulate.

When the last drop of blood had been drawn off in the bowl, the assistants raised the dead body by a rope and carried it beyond the partition-wall. There it was received by other serfs, who carried it outside and immediately set to work to skin it.

Other animals were now brought forward. One by one they were killed, and their blood emptied into the bowl. But their bodies were not carried out afterwards, like the ox's. They were thrown on one side, and left to wait till the sacrifices were over.

A speckled bull was offered to Frey. All the other

animals were offerings to Odin, the god of battle, so that he should give success and victory to the Viking expeditions which would take place in the summer.

Last came Thor's only offering — the serf-woman, Trude, was brought forward. A pair of serfs dragged her to the wall, where two assistants received her and stripped her rags from her body. The crowd waited breathlessly. But not a groan or a gasp came from the serf-woman, Trude. She was dragged by her hair before the Hammer-wielder, lifted up, and laid with the small of her back crosswise over the sharp edge of the stone altar. Then Atle Jarl made the sign of the hammer over the offering, and the serfs pressed her down. A scream of unspeakable terror tore through the air, and died away in a blood-curdling low, quivering wail. With broken back the serf-woman, Trude, lay across Thor's sacrificial stone.

The bowl filled to the brim was now lifted by the assistants and set on its mound again. Atle Jarl drew the sacrificial bracelet off his arm, rubbed it in the blood, and drew it on his arm again. Then he took the rod and began sprinkling the steaming blood around. First he sprinkled Odin, then Thor, then Frey, and afterwards each of the gods. Also the walls, ceiling, and floor he sprinkled with the protective sacrificial blood. When Atle Jarl had finished the ceremonies within the partition-wall, the assistants lifted the bowl, and, sprinkling the blood on the right and the left, he went out of the temple, followed by the assistants bearing the bowl. When it had been emptied of the last drop, the bowl was carried back and set in its place.

But the sacrifices were not yet over. Odin's chariot was now drawn out of the temple, and two splendid white horses were yoked to it. Then a serf came forward, chosen for his stature for the part, and was dressed in the ox's skin, with the horns and hoofs hanging down and the tinkling bells attached to it.

The procession to Odin's grove was arranged, with Atle Jarl at the head bearing the bloody ax over his shoulder. After him came the serf with the ox-skin and bells. Then came Odin in his car drawn by white horses and surrounded by white-robed assistants. The rear of the procession was brought up by the crowd. Silently, the creaking of the car and the tinkling bells being the only sounds audible in the bright night, the procession went forward to Odin's grove. There were waiting already the nine serfs and the criminals, who, by being strung up as sport for the winds, should appease the storm-god, each tied to his death tree.

Odin's car was driven forward to an open space, surrounded by sharp stones. Only the priest and his consecrated helpers ventured to enter the ring of stones. When Odin's car was brought to the place, and the crowd had arranged themselves, the assistants went, two by two, to the waiting victims. One fixed the cord and made sure that both it and the branch were strong, the other loosed the victim's bonds. One of the serfs wailed and begged for his life. He met only contemptuous glances, and was kicked and thumped by the assistants. As he would not be quiet, they forced a stone in between his jaws.

When Atle Jarl saw that his assistants had finished

their preparations he gave a sign. At the same instant the victims were strung up all together. Just before they had ceased their struggles a whistling sound came through the wood. A gust of wind imparted a swinging motion to the dangling bodies. A thrill of satisfaction mingled with awe went through the hearts of those assembled. Odin had accepted the offering. Slowly the procession wound its way back from Odin's grove. When they reached the temple, the dead bodies of the sacrificed animals had already been carried away by serfs, to be flayed and divided. The body of the serf-woman, Trude, had also been removed. It had been sunk in the holy well by the gable-end of the temple. This was not the first victim it had swallowed.

Odin was drawn to his place on the right hand of Thor. Atle Jarl took the sacrificial bracelet off his arm and laid it on the mound by the side of the bowl. This concluded the first part of the sacrificial feast — the slaughter night. The people went to their tents and crept under their skins, to get a little sleep. The early spring day was already dawning in the east.

## XII

Ingolf and Leif went silently towards the tent. Ingolf was pleasantly fatigued, and felt cheerful. He enjoyed the mental relaxation and dreamy sleepiness which follows when an inner excitement has found its natural relief. He went from the ceremony confirmed in his faith with strengthened will. He felt himself in covenant relation with his ferocious gods.

With Leif the case was opposite. He had been sickened by the sight and smell of the blood of the sacrificed animals. All the rest, and especially Ingolf's behaviour, had had a repelling effect upon *him* who did not believe in the gods, nay, who had a profound contempt for these ugly, bedizened images of wood. Ingolf's thorough absorption in the ceremonies had made him sick at heart. Here was something he did not understand. How *could* Ingolf quietly watch helpless men being ill-treated and murdered in honour of the gods? How *could* he worship gods whom he believed he could appease by hanging serfs and criminals in their honour? Leif did not understand it. He felt himself suddenly alone, and an eager longing for Helga took possession of him. There was something about Ingolf which was beyond his comprehension. In relation to the gods there would always be something to divide them. Hitherto this had possessed such a slight significance for Leif that he had not given the matter a thought. Now it grew suddenly, assumed a shape, and was not to be got away from. Ingolf must certainly not become aware how great a difference there was between them in this respect. For if he did, how could he think of entering into brotherhood with him?

Leif's emotion seethed and fermented. With every step his inward excitement rose higher. To speak out to Ingolf would never do; if once he began to speak, wild and uncontrolled words would stream from his tongue. And he had vowed to himself never to let his fiery temperament discharge itself in evil words over Ingolf.



But, on the other hand, the excitement in his mind gradually became uncontrollable. And now they were so near the tents, that only a few steps more would rob him of the opportunity of relieving himself. He stopped, perplexed, without knowing what he should say or do.

“Ingolf!” he broke out suddenly, as if in bewilderment; his voice was hoarse and unrecognizable. Ingolf stopped, surprised, and turned towards him. In an instant they were confronting each other, Ingolf with an astonished, questioning expression in his eyes and face, Leif quivering in every limb with an excitement which bid fair to derange his mind. He rushed at his cousin, flung his arms round him tightly, and hissed from between his clenched teeth: “Look out!”

Ingolf did not understand what he was about, and had no time to consider. He needed all his presence of mind to keep on his legs, for Leif attacked him with all his might, and his strength seemed to increase with his exertions. Ingolf was not long in discovering that this was serious; he had to defend himself or fall. Leif hissed and groaned and bellowed like a maniac. Ingolf thought it was best to make an end of it, and passed gradually over to the offensive. But it took him time, and he needed to exert all his strength to overcome Leif. At last he succeeded. He took advantage of a slip on Leif's part, slowly deprived him of his foothold — then came the decisive moment — Leif overbalanced and fell.

Ingolf remained lying on the top of him. He had a good grip, and held him fast. Leif's face was purple and swollen, and he foamed at the mouth. His eyes

were bloodshot, and were so furious that Ingolf suddenly felt pity for him.

“Cousin, be reasonable now,” he begged persuasively. But to be overcome in such a purely physical way had been too much for Leif. He struggled hopelessly to get one arm loose, and when he did not succeed he hissed with suppressed rage: “I could kill you!” Ingolf let him go at once and sprang up. But Leif did not do the same, as he had expected. He had discharged his emotions now and had given up. He remained lying with his eyes closed, while the shame scorched and burnt in his soul.

Ingolf stood for a little while looking at him. He felt the wrath lurking in ambush within himself, and bravely fought with it. “What have I done?” he asked at last quietly.

Leif did not answer, but remained lying there, quiet and motionless, with closed eyes. Within himself he was silently and hopelessly wondering how he should set about opening his eyes and rising. Ingolf stood looking at him. He began gradually to understand him, and to enter into his feelings. Leif had madly set himself against the gods. But what was the use of so attacking him, he would like to know? Well, Leif had his peculiarities in everything. Now he lay there and was ashamed, and could not bring himself to open his eyes. The best thing was to give him a little time to collect himself. Ingolf remained standing awhile and waited. “Come now, Leif!” he urged, in a friendly tone, and Leif rose. Slowly he collected himself and got on his legs. Ingolf stood and looked at him with curi-

osity. His features were relaxed, and his eyes were dull and troubled.

“What was the matter with you?” asked Ingolf earnestly, and could not suppress a little laugh.

Leif stood a short while without answering, as though searching his memory for something he had forgotten. “You needn’t trouble yourself about it,” he answered in a weary and rather shy tone, but not without a certain defiance. “It was not you I hated, but your gods.”

“So it was not very strange you could not win, cousin,” answered Ingolf cheerfully. “You are still too slight of build to fight with the gods.”

“I shall not go with you to a feast any more,” answered Leif, unaffected by Ingolf’s cheerfulness. “This once I may be allowed to say it, and I beg you not to forget it. Your gods and your worship of them are an abomination to me, and will always be so. Even if it should lose me my brother, I must say it.”

There was a smothered warmth in Leif’s words which made Ingolf serious.

“It is just with you, as you are, that I wish to enter into brotherhood, Leif,” he answered quietly. “Your relation to the gods is a matter between you and them. What you think of my worship of them is your own affair. But I am anxious that you should understand that I belong with all my soul and will to the gods. They were my fathers’ gods; if I were false to them, I should be false to my fathers. Rather would I this very moment sacrifice myself to Odin than that that should happen.”

“But then it is a sacrifice on your part,” answered Leif quietly, “when you enter into brotherhood with me who despise the gods, and so have been false to my fathers.”

Ingolf was silent for a while. “It is another matter with you than with me,” he answered. “I cannot explain it, but I feel that it is quite another matter with you. I should become weaker by not believing in the gods; you would become so by believing in them. We are so different, Leif. And I wish to be your brother as you are.”

“I will do my best that you may never regret that,” answered Leif quietly.

They went to their tents. It was already nearly daylight. In the east the sky was faintly red; there was only a short time to the sunrise. Ingolf and Leif did not talk any more. They crept silently into their sleeping-bags. But neither of them could close an eye. They remained lying quiet till nearly midday. When the sun was at its zenith that day, their brotherhood was to be sealed.

Leif was the first who rose. When he had met Ingolf's open eyes, he said in a low, cheerful tone: “Let us run to the stream.”

Ingolf sprang up. “Yes, we will.” They ran to a place outside the encampment, where they were in the shelter of a cliff, and where they had been accustomed to wash themselves when, as small boys, they visited their friends at Gaulum. Ingolf dipped his head in the water, rubbed hard with both hands, and snorted cheerfully. But Leif flung away every stitch of clothing

and lay down in the running water. When Ingolf saw it, he immediately followed his example. And so they lay side by side in the stream, and let the cold running water stream over their bodies, as when they were little boys.

Leif looked at the sun. "We shall have to hurry." They sat for a little while, squeezed the water out of their hair, and let the sun and the wind dry their skins. But the water remained in drops on their skins and would not be dried. Then they took their shirts and rubbed each other, and then dressed in a trice. "Let us go slowly back," said Leif, when they had their clothes on, and Ingolf had to look closer at him, for such a proposal was very unlike him. Leif answered his questioning look. "Otherwise we shall be so breathless, and we are getting too big now to run like children."

When they came up from the little valley in which the stream ran, they saw that the people were already gathered, and hastened their steps. Leif looked up hastily at the sun. "It is not yet quite midday," he said, relieved, but went on.

They arrived at the place at the same time as Atle Jarl, who as high priest was to conduct the proceedings. Atle Jarl, generally a mild and amiable man, wore his severest expression that day. He had the sacrificial bracelet on his arm and a spear in his hand. A serf followed him bearing two turf-cutters and two bright, sharp-pointed knives. The people had gathered round a circular space, marked out with wooden pegs. They readily made way for the two cousins and Atle Jarl.

When they reached the place marked out, Atle Jarl curtly bade the two future brothers take off their shoes and stockings and step into the ring. While they were doing so, he himself stepped into the ring, and with his spear marked off a semicircle within it. Then Ingolf and Leif each received his turf-cutter with orders to begin, each on his own side of the semicircle, and cut a turf loose, taking care, however, that both its ends remained firm. The turf that was to be cut loose was to remain a living part of the ground. Ingolf was set to cut on the outside of the semicircle, Leif on the inside. They each dropped on one knee, stuck their turf-cutters into the ground, and began to cut. Their task was to cut a solid piece of turf which would hold fast when it was raised. Ingolf cut with an even, straight stroke; he was quiet and undisturbed by the people standing and looking at him. Leif, on the other hand, was nervous. He began cutting with all his might; his edge became bent and uneven, and sweat was pouring from him before he had got half through. When the spectators saw their different ways of working, they smiled and winked at each other.

Orn and Rodmar stood just outside the ring. Orn did not look happy, but he concealed his displeasure under a mask of indifference. Rodmar stood and looked angrily at Leif. He could hardly restrain himself from shouting to him and correcting him. He saw, however, clearly that it would only make bad worse, and controlled himself. But he leant towards Orn and whispered as though making an excuse. "Ingolf will need all his quiet and strength before he can get Leif tamed."

“He cannot be tamed,” answered Orn in a low tone, but with emphasis in his voice. “A horse with the staggers cannot be broken in; it is a useless animal, and brings ill-luck.”

“He is my son,” answered Rodmar, who always found fault with Leif but could not bear others doing so. “You judge him too severely.”

“He is your son and my kinsman,” Orn whispered back sombrely, “otherwise this ratification of brotherhood would not have taken place — at least as long as I had a breath left in my body.”

Ingolf and Leif had now cut loose the piece of turf, and went together to lift it. They raised it carefully till it stood straight up and formed an arch. Then Atle Jarl stepped in and placed his spear in the middle of the arch to hold the turf up. He himself stood and supported the spear while Ingolf and Leif cut loose an oblong turf under the arch. Their blood was not to run on the greensward, but was to mingle on the bare earth. When they had finished they gave up their turf-cutters, and at Atle Jarl’s command stepped in under the turf arch, each on his own side of the spear-shaft. Atle Jarl now dictated the oath, and they vowed mutual brotherhood, each with his right hand on the sacred bracelet. When the oath had been taken, serfs came with knives. Atle Jarl received the knives and handed them to the newly-sworn brothers, with the command to confirm the brotherhood they had just inaugurated by letting their blood flow jointly on the sacred earth. Atle Jarl showed them briefly where they should pierce their calves with the knives.

Ingolf and Leif both did so at the same moment. Ingolf thrust his knife-point well in and cut a deep gash. Leif put his knife right through so that the point projected a couple of inches on the other side of his calf. He had difficulty in drawing it out again. The blood ran down in red streams. The spectators felt a strange shuddering thrill at seeing how it oozed out from under the naked soles of their feet. Leif watched the course of his blood attentively as it approached Ingolf's on the brown scar of earth between them. As it seemed to him to go too slowly, he stooped down, directed the streams of blood with the point of his knife, and stirred the blood and earth round between him and Ingolf. A laugh then rang out in the air from hundreds of throats. Even Orn smiled, though against his will, and Atle Jarl's eyes assumed a milder expression.

Leif looked hastily up and straightened himself with a jerk. He looked round, a little astonished, and his eyes rested on Ingolf. A very pleasant smile lay on Ingolf's face, and there was a moist glimmer in his eyes.

Atle Jarl now proclaimed that Ingolf Arnarson and Leif Rodmarsson had entered into legal brotherhood, and named the witnesses. With that the solemn ceremony was at an end. The grass-turfs were carefully laid down again in order that they might grow firm and be incorporated with the earth's life.

Ingolf and Leif were now joined together by the strongest bonds that exist—the blood-tie between brothers, the most sacred and inviolable of all blood and family ties. The earth by which they had been



formed in different mothers' wombs had now drunk their blood mingled, and had at the same time given them new birth, since they had passed together under the turf arch, a part of earth's living frame. The earth knew now, and had recognized their covenant — a covenant no power could break. The sons of Atle were the first who approached to tender their good wishes on the occasion.

Haasten pressed Ingolf's hand and whispered confidentially: "You have in Leif made a brother who at any time and without hesitation will give his blood for you to the last drop. Keep always a watchful eye on him, for his mind is as easily moved as a willow, but it has also the willow's toughness."

Holmsten handed over to Leif a broad-bladed, long-shafted battle-ax with a handle inlaid with gold, a splendid weapon, which made Leif colour with joy. "Here is an ax for you, friend Leif," he said cheerfully. "Swing it bravely, but take care that you do not absent-mindedly come to cleave your friends' heads with it!"

Leif was moved to tears. He kissed Holmsten for the ax. Leif and Holmsten's friendship lasted for whole days, to the great joy and relief of Ingolf and Haasten. They had never before been able to keep the peace for even a few hours at a time. Ingolf began to believe that the costly gifts which had been exchanged between Holmsten and Leif must have some special significance. He felt unusually cheerful in spirits that day. Leif also felt a peace and sense of security which was strange to him. It was as though the responsibility which he had

assumed in entering into brotherhood evoked his manhood. He seemed to have suddenly grown adult. His mind had found an equilibrium, which acted beneficially, and was plainly traceable in his bearing.

Evening came, and the second night of the sacrificial feast was about to commence. As people began to go to the temple, Leif said to Ingolf: "I shall not go. I shall remain at home in the tent."

"Very well, I won't go either," said Ingolf, and tried to appear as though it were a matter of indifference to him.

But Leif would not hear of that. "Those who know me will not be surprised that I remain away," he said. "It is another matter with you. If you won't go alone, you will oblige me to go with you, and I don't much like going there."

At last Ingolf went alone. When he entered the temple the people were already assembled with great jubilation and much noise. On the floor there was burning a fire from one end of the temple to the other outside the partition-wall. This fire, named Langildene ("the long fires"), could be crossed at various points, though only by going through the lambent flames. Over it hung great cauldrons, whence the fumes of the meat of the sacrifices filled the air with vapour and smoke tempting to hungry stomachs.

Tables and benches were arranged on both sides of the fire. It was some time before each man had his horn. Then Atle Jarl rose, consecrated the drinking, and proposed the toast in honour of Odin. It was a toast for Victory and Might, and everyone had to empty his

horn to the bottom. Some made the sign of the hammer over the horn of mead. They were those who trusted in their own power and might. They consecrated their drinking to Thor. Now other serfs entered, bearing great dishes. They fished the meat out of the cauldrons with hooks, filled the dishes, and bore them round. Then began a festive battle for the best morsels, with shouting and laughter which shook the temple.

Women now entered, lifted the gods down from their platforms, took off their dresses, and began to rub them with the fat of the sacrificial animals. This was a very solemn ceremony.

When the guests had appeased their first hunger, full horns stood again before them. Atle Jarl blessed the drinking, and they all emptied their horns in honour of Thor. Then they ate again, but now quietly and deliberately. The dishes were emptied and filled anew. There was no scarcity of food or of beer.

They drank horns to Njord and to Frey for peace and fertility. They drank a horn to Brage, with which they pledged solemn vows. Last of all, Atle Jarl rose, always steady on his legs and firm in his voice (he had tasted mead before), blessed the drinking, and proposed a toast in memory of their deceased kinsmen. That toast used not to be very widely observed — by that time many lay under the table. Others had gone outside, and the rows of the feasters grew thinner.

When Ingolf had gone to the temple, Leif's newly found mental equilibrium suddenly forsook him. He was overcome by a feeling of disquiet, strong and not to be shaken off — a fit of impatience which rankled in his

breast, and made him perspire and feel unwell. Something must be done, he knew not what, until it suddenly became clear to him that he could not do without Helga any longer. He ran home to the house and got hold of a serf, whom he sent with a message to Ingolf. Then he took a bridle in his hands and a saddle over his shoulders and went off to find his horse. There was a strange feverishness in all his proceedings, but he was cheerful and light of heart, as was always the case when he had overcome uncertainty and betaken himself to action. He found his horse, caught and saddled it, and went straight homewards at full gallop. He dared not think at all, for it was plain to him that it would be too long before he could see Helga, and the thought made his heart sick. A feeling of longing was on him, a longing of the strong kind, which grows in force if one gives way to it. His rapid riding gave him relief, and released him from thinking. He entered into a strange relation with the paths he rode by, and every stone and bush which he passed on the way. A pasture which he went by reminded him of the horse, and he dismounted, took off the saddle and bridle, and lay down. The horse rolled on its back awhile, then rose and began grazing eagerly. This haste seemed to quiet Leif's longing, and he lay comfortably there. He allowed the horse to still its sharpest pangs of hunger, but soon his patience was over, exhausted and vanished. He saddled the horse again and went off at full gallop. Daylight came, and he was forced to stop and let the horse breathe and graze a little. This time Leif could not lie still, while it was grazing. He sat a little, walked

a little, and was restless. Long before the proper time he saddled the horse again, but before mounting this time he patted its neck and head, scratched it behind the ear, and spoke kindly to it: "If you hold out, I will remember you as long as we both live!"

So it carried him forward again, over hill and dale, over smooth, grassy plains and stony tracts, over clear streams and roaring rivers. The horse's clattering hoofs awoke in the air alternately falling and rising echoes. So the incredible was accomplished, and the length of the way slowly overcome. One morning at sunrise Leif arrived home. Helga stood outside the house as though she had expected him, and the world seemed new.

"It is you, Leif," said Helga, and did not conceal her gladness. Leif had already sprung from his horse. He ran to her and flung his arms around her. "Helga," he said, and kissed her. "I *had* to come home all at once." Helga laughed.

"I dreamt of you last night," she said, and kissed him. "*That* was what I dreamt."

"What?" asked Leif.

"That I kissed you."

And she kissed him again. That was a happy day.



BOOK II





## I

**Y**EARS passed and nothing happened. There was much talk of disturbance and disquiet in the north of the country. The young King Harald and his uncle, Guttorm, were continually engaged in warfare. Various raisers of disturbance had already been suppressed, but new ones were continually starting up. The latest rumour current was, that the young King purposed, as soon as he had given peace to his Kingdom, to extend it. It did not look as if he had peaceful intentions. Dalsfjord as yet was ravaged only by rumours. No events themselves, only the faint thunders they aroused, came near there.

Orn, however, was always of opinion that it was safest for Rodmar to remain; especially as Leif had now undertaken the management of the property, and Rodmar might as well remain in one place as another.

Much beer was brewed in Orn's house. Perhaps it was not without some connection with this that Orn and Rodmar's talk took all the more a prophetic tinge. Obscure and rather disconnected wisdom flowed liberally from their lips. Leif called this wise talk nonsense, and was not ashamed to laugh openly in his father's face when he was more wise and obscure than ever. Ingolf, on the other hand, although with some difficulty, continued to invest Orn with a halo of dignity, and showed

him all possible filial reverence. He always consulted him in important questions, although certainly only for form's sake. And he never brought forward a matter without having first procured permission to speak. This pleased Orn in a high degree, although he sometimes felt somewhat embarrassed by it, and almost always showed peevishness to his son.

Orn was by no means easy to deal with. For example, Ingolf, at the beginning of the spring when he completed his nineteen winters, went to him to hear his opinion regarding the sowing plans he had made for the summer, and also about a necessary enlargement of the salt-kilns. Orn looked up at him with a scornful and malicious look in his drink-swollen eyes, heard fully all he had to say, and at last broke out harshly on him.

“You are only a peasant! A good-for-nothing you are, although you are tall and heavy enough! *You* wear the family bracelet! What honour have I from you? There is no energy in you. Do you think one finds honour in the fields? Do you think one can plough it out of the ground? Food you find, but never any honour. Do you think a man keeps fresh by burning salt all his life? Keep away from me with your salt-burning and your sowing-plans. Would any one believe you were a free man's son, and soon full grown? Speak with the serfs about it. No — Harald, Halvdan the Black's son — there is a fellow with some stuff in him! You'll feel his knuckles one day — wait and see! He'll mark you all with the brand of slavery — every man of you. Each and all of you will have to pay tribute to him, if you do not want to be shorter

by a head or to have your necks stretched! It is said that he intends to subdue all Norway and to become sole King. How old are you now? Nineteen winters? He is four years younger! You are no King — no! You are right in that. But your forefathers were chiefs, and ruled themselves, and ruled others as the King's peers. Go off to your fields and your salt-burning — I won't listen to you any more. I won't *see* you! Go! Ha! Wait a little. Go first to the smith, and have your fathers' weapons smelted down into meat-axes! Have you not increased your stock? Are you not in want of meat-axes! No, it was something different in my youth. If I had been in my prime now, the good Harald would have found at least one neck he could not break. Unless, indeed, I had deemed it wisest to assist him. That also might be a way to honour. But you have only thoughts for your fields and your salt-burning. Go!"

Thus Orn spoke, and was very irritable. Ingolf listened to him patiently without moving a muscle. And when he received the command to go he retired with a respectful salute. He honoured the family in his father, and did not wear the family bracelet in vain on his young arm. Ingolf looked after his property; Leif neglected his. For the first two years Leif had managed remarkably well alone. But when it no longer amused him to rule and give orders to the house-servants, he began to become somewhat careless. It was to his advantage that his people were reliable and fond of him — remarkably so, in fact. He might scold them thoroughly, using the whole of his copious vocabu-

lary until his voice failed him. He might beat them and abuse them, and bid them ten thousand times to go the straight way north or down to hell. They admired his readiness of speech and energetic irritability. It was always enlivening to see him in a rage. And it was characteristic of him that his wrath was forgotten as soon as it had blazed up. It flashed up like a fire of pine-needles and burnt out at once. Besides, he was not small-minded, and let every one manage his own affairs, so long as he minded his work. He was a kind and cheerful master to serve under. Many plants grew in his track, but never the plant of dullness.

Ingolf had another way with his people. He immediately became a father and providence for them. He was considerate towards the old, and let them have an easy time. They were never weary of blessing him. He visited them often, and his visit was always like a gift. He showed an equable temper with his people, demanded a certain amount of work from them, and expressed in encouraging words his satisfaction with work well done. On the other hand, no one had ever heard a threat from his mouth. He had his own way of showing displeasure by a certain indifferent silence which did not fail of its effect. No one liked to feel himself the object of that quiet taciturnity. His peaceful manner diffused a peculiar sense of security around him. He was careful in his choice when he engaged new people, which rarely happened. Those whom he had once engaged remained with him.

Leif could not alter his nature; he was just Leif,

once and for all. When he had managed his property with diligence and watchfulness for three years it amused him no longer. He began to slacken, and let things go at haphazard. And since they did not seem to go altogether badly that way, he gradually preferred not to look after them at all. So Ingolf found him going idle for whole months at a time. Ingolf wondered at him. How could he choose to go on and undertake nothing? No, that was going too far. Ingolf secretly kept an eye on Leif's property, and saw that it was managed in some way without him, although not thoroughly. So there was all the less reason for him to interfere in Leif's way of living. There resulted a good deal of restraint between the two sworn brothers which was unavoidable. Ingolf tried his best not to let himself be irritated by Leif's idle ways. He exerted himself to meet him as unconstrainedly as before. But his openness was not natural as it used to be, and seemed forced. Leif noticed it without thinking about it, and the feeling of restraint between them continued.

Only seldom did Leif follow Ingolf to the fields or to other business. Their unconscious inner tension robbed their intercourse of all outer comfort or heartiness. The sense of brotherhood and family feeling between them decreased greatly, and threatened to vanish.

Ingolf betook himself to work as a defence. He wrapped himself in business as in a coat of mail, and work shielded him to a certain extent. But the unavoidable vacant hours were like rents in his armour. And the weapons Ingolf had to fight against immediately found every exposed place.

Leif was not the man to notice that something had happened when nothing had really done so. He only felt boredom and emptiness, and the difficulty there is in making time pass when like a refractory horse it begins rearing on its hind-legs. Either he sat alone with Helga and let the hours fly, or he simply lay and lazed somewhere, staring into space and wondering what purpose there can be in a useless day. His mind became every day more unbalanced, and his temper was like a sportive squirrel. Sometimes his restlessness and impatience impelled him to tease and vex those who surrounded him. Not even Helga escaped; on the contrary, just because she was the most helpless before him, it was she who suffered most. Not rarely his words made her cry. Afterwards he sat silent and helpless, unable to repair what he had done, and feeling intolerable pain.

Leif's only excuse was that he was Leif and had lost his balance. The hopeless melancholy of youth was upon him.

Years passed and nothing happened. Hitherto each year had had one event. They visited Gaulum, or Atle's sons visited them. One winter Leif and Ingolf were invited to the feast at Gaulum; the next winter they were the hosts. Hitherto in Leif's mind there had been a halo about these feasts; he had awaited them with eagerness and taken part in them with a happy fervour of abandonment. Now he hardly cared to think of them any more, and had quite ceased to take pleasure in them.

For there had gradually risen in Leif's mind, al-

though he carefully concealed it, a strong ill-will against Atle's sons, especially Holmsten. Holmsten had always been a thorn in his side. Holmsten's voice and vocabulary, his smile, his way of being silent, and his whole character had an irritating effect on Leif. At times, when he was not especially sensitive, he could, as it were, lock such feelings out. But there were other times when he stood and actually shivered with irritation merely at seeing and hearing Holmsten. But, faithful to his oath of brotherhood and promise to Ingolf, he suppressed all feelings of that kind as best he could. In any case, they never broke out. Thus it happened that Holmsten once in a humourous mood made merry over Leif's appearance. He meant nothing serious by it, but an innocent remark about Leif's large nose slipped thoughtlessly out of his mouth. When he saw what effect it had upon Leif, who became quite red in the face, he was immediately sorry, and said nothing. When Leif had thus come to know what he looked like, his eyes were suddenly opened to see how handsome Atle's sons were. From that day it was that he began to hate them in his heart, especially the youngest. He now noticed also how they looked at Helga, when they were on a visit. He did not like those looks. Of course he could well understand that they could scarcely keep their eyes from Helga. But Helga was his, and that made a difference. And although Atle's sons could not know that, yet at any rate they ought not to look at Helga so. It was especially Holmsten with whom Leif found himself angry — Holmsten, whose existence from the time that Leif was

a boy had rankled like a thorn in his mind. Holmsten was undeniably the handsomest of the brothers, perhaps because he, as the youngest, was now at the handsomest age. Moreover, it was Holmsten whose look fastened on Helga with the greatest pertinacity.

Leif was pained, and suffered. The most intolerable part about it almost was that it was impossible for him to let Helga notice his jealousy. She did not give the slightest occasion for it, but that did not comfort Leif at all — on the contrary. This made Leif's behaviour towards her rough and unintelligible. She was almost obliged to believe that he was no longer as fond of her as he had been, since he at times could do without her. It was only the pain in his look, even when he behaved in the most capricious way, which quieted her doubts. Yet she went about sometimes with such pensive eyes. There sat Leif, with a feeling of emptiness like a man who must see the most precious thing he possesses slip out of his hand, and cannot move a finger. Leif could at times become so anxious about Helga that all gladness and pleasure in life forsook him. Often she looked at him with a questioning and troubled look, and shut herself within herself.

The summer after Leif had completed seventeen and Ingolf nineteen winters, Atle's sons for the first time went on a Viking expedition. That summer was the worst Leif had ever experienced. The want of occupation, and the complete absence of all events, became doubly intolerable now that he knew that other young men, who were not much more than his own equals in



age, were sailing out on the wide ways of the sea, making the acquaintance of foreign people and lands, trafficking or fighting with those whom they encountered wherever they went, and, in any case, having new experiences every day and every hour of the day. These thoughts were so painful that Leif at times became quite poorly and depressed when they attacked him.

That summer there arose besides in his distracted and uneasy mind a besetting idea, which, when it had once taken root, was not to be shaken off. Suppose Holmsten should be killed that summer, how would Helga receive the news when she heard it? He could sit silent and watch her for hours at a time in order to discover an answer to this question. Sometimes he introduced the Viking expedition of Atle's sons as a topic of conversation before her. She did not seem specially interested in it, but talked willingly, though without great interest, about it. These conversations gave Leif a strong impression of woman's falsity!

At last there came a day when he could hold out no longer, threw away all shame, and went to Helga and told her that news had come from Atle's sons that Holmsten had fallen. Helga sat for a while pensive and serious. "So we shall never see him more," she said, with a slight tremor in her voice. "I cannot really imagine Atle's sons without thinking of them all three together — so I remember them the first time I saw them, so one always saw them. His brothers will be very grieved at losing him."

Leif listened breathlessly, but her words and tone made him no wiser. "Was it Haersten — or Haas-

ten?" he thought. "I should have told her that all three had fallen."

Utterly discomfited by this frustration of his attempt at surprise, he gave it up altogether. Now he was reckless. "That is not true," he confessed wearily. "There has come no news from Atle's sons."

Helga became quite silent from surprise. Her astonished look rested almost anxiously upon him. "How can you take it into your head to say such things?"

Leif looked maliciously and despairingly at her. "It is still too early to weep for Holmsten," he said coldly and scornfully. Then he rose suddenly and went. As he stepped out of the door, a burst of cheerful, rippling laughter broke out behind him. "Why does she laugh?" he thought, anxious and angry at the same time, but did not turn round to examine her face. The rest of the day he kept puzzling about her laugh. Did she laugh because it was not true that Holmsten had fallen, or did she only laugh at him, because she had discovered that he was jealous of Holmsten? For the rest it seemed to Leif that neither was a laughing matter. So morbid had he gradually become that all laughter seemed to him suspicious and unbecoming. It took Helga several days to eradicate the effects of her laughter from Leif's mind. Even kisses and embraces seemed ineffectual. He suffered from his peculiar obstinate temper, insisting that he had been insulted, but unable to overcome it. It required a severe effort before he could bring himself to repay Helga's gentleness with the same.

But then he seemed all at once to have become quite different. It seemed as though the exposure he had made of himself had cured him. He felt an immense relief. Now he had, at any rate, proof that Helga would neither become white as snow, nor fall dead, even if she should hear that Holmsten had fallen. He began gradually to surmise that his jealousy was only a cobweb of the brain.

Besides this, a thought had taken possession of him which drove all spiteful spectres out of his mind. As early as the next summer he would go on a Viking expedition himself. He would not remain here and become prematurely old and peevish. It was true that at summer-time he would still be two years short of the regular Viking age. But Ingolf would at that time be of the right age and could get his going legalized — for Ingolf would go too, as a matter of course. They could not go about at home for ever and become moss-grown without and mouldy within.

“Look at the old men!” he broke out, when in words that stumbled over each other he made Helga privy to his plan. “Must one not be sorry for them? Yet they have been young once. This is what age makes of people. It is better, when one is good for nothing else but boasting, to have something to boast of, than for want of experiences to become a wretched liar.”

“Do you think that you will some day become like — like your father?” asked Helga, smiling. She thought Rodmar was worse than Orn.

“Without doubt,” answered Leif decidedly. “I can

certainly not realize it. But why should I become otherwise? Must they not have once been young and full of life? Now they drivel!"

Helga sat for a little while and thought. And while she thought, her expression changed and became pensive and serious.

"You are so imprudent, Leif," she said, with anxious eyes, "I fear you will be killed in your first battle."

Leif laughed arrogantly. "Have you not noticed that I am invulnerable," he outbroke, with a beaming smile, "that nothing can injure me? There is something or other which protects me. I have thought about it. It can only be *your* love, Helga. What else should it be?"

Helga kissed him. She had tears in her eyes. "If my love can protect you, Leif, you *are* invulnerable. My own friend, do whatever you will, only do not quite forget me."

Leif hurried from the place to meet Ingolf. And when he found him he as so completely the old Leif, with body and soul intent upon a definite object, that, with the stream of his talk and the irresistible absoluteness of his manner, he swept all ill-humour out of Ingolf's mind. Now that Leif had become quite himself again, Ingolf needed no more to be on the watch regarding his own attitude towards him. Ingolf stood quite quietly, listened to him, and allowed him to talk freely, without the slightest attempt at interruption. He merely stood and looked at him, and enjoyed feeling how his eagerness infected his own mind like a happy

excitement. Ingolf felt at that moment a gladness which he had forgotten. He could have embraced his brother.

While Leif spoke further and developed his plans, Ingolf pondered. He only followed Leif's stream of talk with one ear, only to ensure that nothing important escaped him. Meanwhile, he subjected the project to independent consideration. Perhaps it was, at any rate, over early to join in a Viking expedition just now. Perhaps they ought rather to wait a couple of years; Leif was so young, and was still not of the warrior's age. But, on the other hand, Leif needed a change just now. And he was quite self-reliant, though not of the proper age. They could also train themselves in the use of weapons in the winter. If they waited, Leif would again become strange and not to be understood or put up with. For Leif's sake they must go. How completely he was again the old Leif, even in his thoughts!

Ingolf concluded his considerations by saying: "I will talk with my father about the matter," in the middle of Leif's stream of words. Then Leif became uncontrollable for a while. He seized hold of Ingolf and whirled him round. He knew that with this sentence the matter was decided. But it seemed to him when, out of breath he let his laughing brother go, that he absolutely must say something about Orn.

"The old blusterer!" he snorted contemptuously. "To think that we should guide ourselves by *his* opinion.

Well, do as you like. Only forget not to say that we shall bring wine home for him — much wine. Then you

will see how tractable he will become. I will promise my father the same, in order to make him willing to give up the keys of the weapon-chest."

Ingolf went to his father, put the matter in a few words before him, asked him for ships and merchandize, and first and foremost for his consent to their making an expedition the next summer.

While Ingolf talked, Orn sat with a dull look and an unwilling expression in his face, as if it was with difficulty that he heard him to the end. "Ships and merchandize are your own," he answered peevishly, when Ingolf was silent. "You can do with both what you will, and it would not surprise me if you returned home empty-handed. Leif will still prove a costly brother to you. He will be captured, and you will have to pay the ransom. Keep a good watch on the ships, and don't let yourself be cheated in trafficking. When they offer you one cask of wine for a bear's skin, you should ask three, then you will get two. For the rest, you can go anywhere in the world as far as I am concerned, if only you do not disgrace your father. Go! No, wait a little. If Atle's sons go again on an expedition in the summer, show that you have a little intelligence, and go with them. Then you will be five together, and can better hold your own where you go. But if you return home without a good stock of red wine from the land of the Franks, I will never see you before my eyes, or hear so much as the sound of your voice. Go!"

Leif also talked with his father. He was extravagant in his description of the matter, and lavish in promises. He simply told his father that now in Ireland and the

British Isles grape-wine from all the lands of the earth could be bought. When the old Rodmar, made young again by the thought of earth's flowing glories, began to talk of travelling with them, Leif changed his tone, and pictured the dangers and fatigues of the journey in vivid colours. Then Rodmar shrivelled into himself again and gave up the thought of travelling.

But Leif got the keys of the weapon-chest, and for the first time obtained his father's blessing.

Ingolf told Leif that his father had proposed that they should join with Atle's sons in the expedition. At first Leif was a little annoyed, but his joy was so great that everything else became of secondary importance in comparison with the prospect that he was going out — out on long journeys in the wide world. He saw at once the reasonableness of the proposed arrangement. They gained in strength by joining with Atle's sons, and would be invincible. Besides, there would be more ships, and the expedition would be a grander thing all round. And there was, moreover, something enticing in the idea of being with Atle's sons and witnessing what good and evil befell them.

Perhaps he would have the experience of seeing one or more of them fall by the enemy's hand. That would be an experience worth bringing home. When he had got so far in his considerations, he gave Ingolf's proposal his unconditional approval.

There was much joy in Orn's house. The old men were enlivened, their stories became more cheerful, and they were not quite so peevish as before. They already anticipated beforehand in their thoughts how the barrels

of red wine from the land of the Franks would be trundled up to the house from the landing-place. They knew how a barrel of wine should be handled from the moment the bung was drawn out till it stood empty. They already became fastidious and difficult to please with their thoughts of the red wine.

From that time they drank only mead. All other beer tasted sour, they said, and wrinkled their noses. One day Orn summoned Ingolf and reminded him in an imperious tone of honey: "From henceforth only mead will be brewed here in the house. Go!"

Ingolf smiled to himself when he came out from his father. When no one saw it, he permitted himself now and then a smile. Ingolf and Leif had their ships examined, and made other preparations.

Leif spent most days down below at the boat-houses. He was indefatigable, and showed a reflectiveness and care in his preparations which both surprised and rejoiced Ingolf.

They were to equip three ships, so there was much to do in taking goods on board and arranging them, especially as the ships had not been used for many years, and had therefore to be made taut, tarred and thoroughly overhauled.

Ingolf and Leif divided the work: Leif looked after the ships and their equipment, while Ingolf managed the properties of both, and arranged for obtaining by exchange goods for the expedition.

Leif was indefatigable. Neither the autumn's clammy rain nor the winter's keen frost and furious snowstorms overcame his energy. The whole day long,



and sometimes far into the night, he was at the water-side. Helga had to seek him there so that he should not be quite apart from her. She was glad to see him so happy and absorbed. She was very warm-hearted, and when he could spare her some time, it was as though he gave her a treasure. When he thus for a time had forgotten his work, Helga's exuberant feeling, mingled with the desire to see Leif at work, made her occasionally remind him that he forgot the time. The energy with which he set to work again could be a song of secret gladness in Helga's heart for the rest of the day.

That winter it was Ingolf and Leif's turn to visit Atle's sons. Already during their first day at Gaulum, Ingolf brought up the subject which was to him at the moment of greatest importance. Turning to Haasten, he told the brothers that he and Leif had resolved to go on an expedition in the summer, and proposed to join them under Haasten's leadership, provided the brothers also had determined on a cruise.

Atle's sons had had a prosperous summer and were going out again. Haasten considered it self-evident that they should go in company. He asked his brothers' opinion. Haersten agreed with him. "Leif is two winters short of the regular Viking-age," answered Holmsten, with so little reflection that he hardly knew he had said it, before the words were out of his mouth.

Leif coloured. And as was always the case when he became angry, he involuntarily straightened himself. "Let us see if I stand back in any matter, when occasion arises," he answered, keeping calm successfully.

“If not, is there any reason for setting me aside on account of my youth?” Ingolf stood pale and resolute. “Leif and I go together,” he said slowly. “I did not think this objection possible, or I would not have brought forward any proposal for fellowship. Yet we all know how common it is that the elder lawfully take the younger. Now, yet us talk no more about it. We brothers are men enough to make our way for ourselves.”

“I for my part am willing to go in fellowship with you both,” answered Holmsten quietly and undisturbed, “and willing to take Leif. I only meant by what I said to draw attention to the fact that he is not of the legal age.”

“Then your words were incautious and liable to be misunderstood,” said Haasten reprovingly, in a severe tone which he seldom used towards his brothers. Then turning to Ingolf he continued: “We brothers offer you our fellowship, and beg you earnestly not to decline our offer. We have been friends since we were boys. We belong together on sea and on land. I will answer for it that we brothers keep our agreement to the last drop of our blood and the last farthing in our possession.”

Thus they agreed to sail together on a Viking expedition under the leadership of Haasten as the eldest. The place and time of their meeting would be further discussed with Ingolf at the time of the spring sacrifice.

## II

One sunny day in the fresh early summer, when airy white clouds were passing across the bright blue sky and a cheerful breeze was blowing over the dark blue sea, Ingolf and Leif sailed with their six ships from Dalsfjord to meet Atle's sons at Hisargavl.

Busy days had preceded their departure. Ingolf had in the course of the year collected a quantity of goods. They had to be divided among the ships, put on board, stowed away, and secured carefully. There were dried fish in quantities — some which they had caught themselves, and some bought from Lofoten. There were dried skins. There were large bales of wool. There was also a quantity of furs, obtained from inland by commerce with the Finns; light wares, minever, and other varieties of skins. When the goods had been stowed together amidships, the whole heap was covered with skins for protection against rain and sea, and well secured besides by long ropes and straps of hide.

The two largest of Ingolf's and Leif's six ships were dragon-ships. Each had five-and-thirty oars on board, in all, seventy oar-holes, and were remarkable warships. Splendidly carved dragon-heads, which could be taken off and put on at pleasure, towered high over the sharp prows, showing their teeth in war-like fashion and with tongues stretched out contemptuously against sea and sky, storms and enemies. The stern of the ship formed the dragon's tail, was artistically carved, and was, as well as the gunwale, adorned with ingenious intertwined devices.

The other ships were smaller. Two of them had thirty oars on board, the others five-and-twenty. They were also ornamented with animals' heads on the bows, and devices along the gunwale and stern, although not so splendidly as the leading ships.

Ingolf and Leif stood each on the poop of his dragon-ship when the little fleet rowed out from the landing-place by Orn's house. On the higher ground were gathered all those who were to remain behind at home. While the ships were still near the land, loud shouts of farewell were exchanged between those who stayed behind and those who were departing. But very soon the long, slender ships with their rows of oars crept out of hearing. They could then only make signs to one another.

All this fuss about departure annoyed Ingolf. As soon as they were in somewhat open water, he had the striped, four-sided, square sail hoisted. There was only one sail to each ship, but this one could be turned round the mast and managed with great ease and skill.

While they were still near land Leif often turned and looked back. He only saw one among the figures of those left behind — a girl whose fair hair floated in the breeze. She stood so still. Every time he saw her, his eyes filled with tears, which blotted her from his view. He did his best to refrain from weeping, but was on the verge of tears. For the moment the expedition lost all its attraction for him. He felt suddenly that wherever Helga was not, there was only triviality and tediousness. If he could have done so honourably he would have turned back. He felt the separation so acutely

that he was neither aware of the blue sea nor the sunny day. He could not understand why he had not before considered how impossible it really was to be parted from Helga for a whole summer. He suffered, moreover, from a painful consciousness that in his joyful absorption in the prospect of going on an expedition he had not thought of her at all. He hoped that she would not feel the separation so severely as he did, but immediately retraced the wish. For there was a certain consolation in being missed. His distress and inner confusion were great. Rapid oars were rowing away from Helga and home, which had always made brightness in his soul, and had now increased indescribably in value and attractiveness — rapid oars were rowing him away, and he had to let it be so. He was also obliged, in order not to let himself fall behind, to pull himself together and, following Ingolf's example, give command to hoist the sail.

The striped sail bellied out joyfully before the breeze. The heavily loaded ships pitched moderately. The water foamed around their bows and splashed against their sides. It was a voyage of the kind which makes a man feel peaceful and comfortable. The sting of grief in Leif's consciousness was dulled. His bereavement was mollified by the joy of journeying. The fjord opened out, and angry-looking waves spoke seriously with the ships, though always in the most friendly way. Willingly and yieldingly, if only they were able to float and advance, the ships obeyed the movements of the waves.

The crews on board were very cheerful. Sailing was

a pleasure. They raised their ringing voices in a loud song, while they looked to the weapons, ground their axes, fixed spear-points firm in their shafts, sharpened knives, and tested the strength of their bows. The oars lay in piles on the forks hung up for that purpose, and the wind was friendly enough to do the work. It was all as it should be; it was a happiness to live and a joy to think that they would soon have use for their weapons. Arms and legs were stretched out, and muscles were carefully and critically felt. Yes, they were all right. Some had specially hard and round knots of muscle to show, which were felt by all the bystanders, and the owners were both congratulated and secretly envied. The youngest, and those who had the most copious vocabulary, swore by the salt water and the golden bristles of the holy boar that they would neither admire nor envy. Secretly they promised themselves that they would take good swigs from the train-oil barrel.

Thus the day passed, and it was a glorious day.

By the evening there was only a certain, not altogether uncomfortable, depression remaining from the pain Leif had felt at parting from Helga. The rest of it he threw off in sleep. As he saw before him coasts which he did not know and had not seen before — perfectly new coasts in varied beauty — his mind took its last and decisive turn. Henceforth it only looked forward.

“Is that Norway, too?” he asked, rubbing his eyes. “And have we sailed the whole night? Norway is great and beautiful! It must be splendid to live here.”

He swallowed every new view with greedy eyes. These strange coasts aroused an intense desire to live in him. Here life was lived and many things happened — many things which one had no idea of.

The sworn brothers met Atle's sons, who also had each three ships, at Hisargavl, as they had agreed. And carried by a breeze, which had increased to what Vikings would call a good wind, the fifteen ships steered westward over the sea. They intended to go to the British Isles and greet the chiefs there. The ships glided smoothly over the water, keeping together as much as possible. Acquaintances were made between the ships, accompanied by mutual promises of beer and wine. The new friends swore to drink each other's healths in horns as soon as opportunity offered. There was much merriment on board. Here young and old felt in high spirits. On the sea they were at home, as everywhere where there was a prospect of adventure and the clash of weapons. And as the wind increased in strength their spirits rose.

When, next day, there came a storm, their expressions of joy were not quite so boisterous and demonstrative; now each had something to look after with his oar or scoop, but the air on board was full of courage and contentment with events as they might arrange themselves. A demand was made on their strength, and that was not bad, since they had it. They would show the old storm-god, Aegir, that they too would gladly have a brush with him. "Come on, Aegir's daughters, whose kiss is wet and salt and in its way burning! Come on, you white-tufted, seaweed-adorned young

maidens! The Vikings will not shrink from any embrace, not even when willingly offered. Even Valkyries and Aegir's daughters they will embrace with joy. Come on! You will see our fellow's strength!" Thus they sang and boasted. This voyage made the old feel young in soul again and matured the young. Gliding along with oar and scoop, they chewed their dry fish. They had a long time to wait for any real sleep and rest. In the light nights a healthy man sleeps only like the birds. If he is on a sea voyage, he closes one eye, takes what rest he can get amid the waters, and enjoys the night air. For the rest, he chews his dried fish and is content. One must take the wind and water as it chances. If neither sun nor stars are visible, one sails by instinct, which is easy. Odin the All-Father has had his offerings, and Njord also is at hand. Perhaps the gods guide when the stars fail. And, anyhow, the Norns have not lost them from sight. They received what was due to them, and that was as it should be.

After some days and nights of sailing in storm and cloudy weather the Vikings sighted land. One sleety morning, after a night of rain, some bare, bleak islands emerged from the fog; otherwise they seemed quite comfortable. The sea sang them lullabies, and bordered them with white foam along the cliffs, like a certain other land. Broad billows broke in mighty abandonment against rugged coasts. "It must be splendid to live here," thought Leif. He stood and stared at the land with longing in his eyes. Now they knew where they were, and could confidently sail farther. One group of islands succeeded another, all equally bleak



and bare. The old experienced Vikings informed the ignorant that there were the Hjaltland and Orkney Islands. The two brothers had heard the names before. Now they knew where they were situated. The Orkneys, the Hjaltland Islands — here they lay.

Ingolf was almost disappointed, though he regarded the islands with interest. He said: "They are desert islands; what good is there in them?" "They are easy to defend," an old sea-dog answered him. Immediately the islands gained in Ingolf's estimation, but he did not want to live there.

They sailed farther, and came to other islands, equally bleak and bare — islands with small, narrow valleys, and here and there a crooked, worn, storm-hardened fir. Those who had not voyaged before, learned that these were the South Islands. They lay here in the midst of the sea, exposed to everlasting storms, roared around by unwearied billows, veiled in rain and fog. "Here the sun seldom shines," one of Leif's company informed him, "and certainly never for a whole day." Leif thought that it was a strange and melancholy country. There was something in his mind which responded to these islands. He would gladly live here.

They sailed on, and found blue sky and sunshine on the sea.

At last they approached the shore of England. When Ingolf and Leif saw it, each remained standing on his poop dumb with delight, and a song arose in both their souls. This was certainly a rich and glorious land! Such fertility they had never thought possible

on earth. Did the vine grow here? Leif asked his fellow-countryman, with quiet awe in his voice. The old greybeard answered him, and said that as far as he knew, when he reflected, the vine did not grow in a land so far north. "This land's fertility and wealth is certainly great, but nothing compared to that of the land of the Franks," he concluded. Leif willingly believed him, but did not understand. Here it must be good to live. In spite of all bedizened wooden gods, here he *would* dwell. "Or let me first see many lands," he added at once with a ravenous, hungry consciousness of not being able to live everywhere. "Ah! The glorious lands of this earth — there a life is lived which one has no part in!" he thought to himself, and felt empty in soul.

Haasten had the peace flag hoisted, and they sailed towards the land. This would be a good place to trade in. They anchored their ships in a little bay among wood-covered hills and heights. A crowd of armed men had already gathered on the place on the shore where they were preparing to land, and stood gazing towards the ships. There was evidently a great deal to find out on both sides. Yet they seemed, in spite of their weapons, quite peaceful, and in consequence they also hoisted the trade flag.

The ships arranged themselves side by side, according to Haasten's directions, the first so near to the land that it could be made fast by a rope to a rock on the shore.

Men with long hooks stood at the ship's sterns and kept them stationary, till the anchor-stones fell in their

proper places, and it was clear that the ships were secured. Then a long, slender plank with steps cut in it was pushed towards the land. By it Atle's sons and the two sworn brothers with them went ashore.

The chiefs of the district inquired of them in courteous language what they had to sell. Haasten told them, and asked them in turn what wares could be bought here. When all information had been given it was clear that both parties wished to trade, and they quickly resolved on a two weeks' peace for that purpose.

When the peace was made, and hostages given on both sides, serfs dragged cauldons and iron stands on shore. Other serfs were sent to collect fuel. How good it would be to taste hot food again! On board the ships no fire could be made; there one lived on dried fish, dried and smoked meat, and bread which gradually became a trial to their teeth. That was luxurious fare on board, and tasted well in hungry mouths. On land it was another story; there they liked to sit round a smoking pot. The first thing they bought was an ox. There-with *that* day was finished.

Leif was very restless; he had to go out and look round the neighbourhood. He chose a number of his best men, obtained leave to kill game, and gave himself up to roaming about the woods, not so much to hunt as to see. He feasted his eyes on the mighty forests and the beauty of the calm lakes. He drank in joyfully the foreign air, and let his mind be charmed by the contours of the foreign landscape.

But the unrest in his blood would not be quieted. The wonderful perfume from all the growths of the earth,

the sight of the luxurious overarching fruit-trees in blossom, the fragrant scent of the meadows, and the profusion everywhere of brightly coloured flowers — all these combined to intoxicate him. Besides, he obtained wine, which he had never tasted before, and was transported in gladness and forgetfulness. He also looked with restless curiosity in the bright, promising eyes of many delightful young women — eyes which tempted like ripe fruit.

When a week had passed in this way, Ingolf spoke to him in a friendly and smiling fashion, and reminded him that he was forgetting to trade. Leif was a little embarrassed by his smile, and suddenly became very busy. It was true he had completely forgotten to trade. He went to the market and looked at the wares. And when he saw there a quantity of silk goods and richly elaborated ornaments of gold, silver, and gilded bronze, he remembered Helga, gave himself up to trade, and forgot to chaffer about the things. He bought many ornaments. As soon as he had bought one, he fell in love with another. He bought precious stones, costly clothes, and delicate silks. Then his eye fell on some artistic gold-embroidered stuffs he had never seen the like of, and he bought a quantity of them. Glasswares of different kinds, goblets, vessels, and pearls were also a speciality; of them he had to make a copious selection. He enjoyed this new experience of looking at things and then buying them. An article which he had never seen before, and had not the faintest idea that it existed in the world, became suddenly his property, and as-

sumed life and significance. That gave expansion to his mind.

Ingolf kept an eye upon him, and amused himself in his quiet way at his method of trading. In commerce as in everything else Leif was simplicity itself, and never learnt to use his reason or to keep within bounds. Ingolf let him go on till he found he had gone far enough; then he put the brakes on.

“Give me now rather power to trade with your wares,” he proposed to him. “You are no good at trade; you only buy the most unnecessary things, and let yourself be cheated into the bargain. In the winter you cannot satisfy your hunger with clothes or allay your thirst with empty glass goblets.” Leif saw that he was right, and willingly granted him the desired authority. He had bought many things, and felt like a king. Already he pictured to himself his homecoming. First he would give Helga a single article such as he did not possess many of. She would kiss him, and her face would be tinged with a delicate red, as was the case when she was happy or emotionally stirred. Then he would come with another thing and still another, till Helga stood speechless with her eyes full of tears. Then he would draw her to himself. . . .

It seemed to him a very long, dreary summer he was approaching. As he was in the act of leaving the market his eye fell on an ornament with carved figures of gilt bone. He felt he must have it, even if it cost three bear-skins. Ingolf intervened in the matter, and Leif obtained the ornament for one bearskin. So he was at

length satisfied and gave up all further trading. Then he roamed round again in the woods with his little following, or simply lay and dozed, and let longing and delight pass like swift breezes through his mind. "Ah, England," he thought, "your land is fertile and your women are beautiful."

He wished gradually that he could live and be married in all the lands of the earth — preferably all at once. He dreamt much of women at that time. He imbibed their various charms with much appreciation. But sometimes his longing for Helga drove all others out of his mind. Helga sat at home and was faithful to him, and awaited him with longing. How did the days pass with her? His heart began to beat heavily and with a feeling of guilt regarding her. She possessed him once for all. She was his. Yes, she was like the year, and the other women were like days — the fleeting days. He compared in his thoughts all the different women, who had made an impression on him, with Helga. One by one they faded and disappeared as he remembered Helga, who was his. They disappeared — yes! But it is to be observed that this lasted only till he saw them again, when they again kindled his restlessness and manifold longing.

The day came when the trade-truce was over. Haasten did not think there was any reason to prolong it, and consulted Ingolf on the subject. Ingolf answered that they had bought what they wanted, and agreed with him. So the hostages were returned on both sides with many precautions, and the Viking-ships, disburdened of their cargoes, rowed out of the bay and hoisted

sail. But they only sailed away for appearance' sake. By night they ran into another bay. They had a great desire to get some spoil along the fertile coast. But they did not return unexpected. The chief of the district, foreseeing this possibility, had collected all his people, and now stood ready to meet them on the shore. Haasten thought it safer not to attempt a landing where so many opposed them, and ordered the ships to row out of the bay again.

The old Vikings grumbled, his brothers were silent, and Leif foamed with rage. But Haasten did not care at all. He remained lying outside the bay for two days and nights. The weather was calm, and not suitable for sailing. He held the chief and his people bound to the spot. Then what he expected happened. A powerful wind made it possible to set sail at once, to run down along the coast quicker than the people on shore could follow, to anchor up the mouth of a river, and to have the crews drawn up on land in battle-array before the main force of the people of the district could get there.

Haasten had only allowed a few men to remain on board, but his force was far inferior in numbers to that of the defenders. The fight took place in a flat meadow along the river. Haasten quickly saw that he had undertaken more than he could manage. These native troops had obviously encountered the Vikings before. Haasten quickly gave his people orders to take refuge on board; he did not wish to run the risk of losing men so early in the summer.

Leif and Holmsten happened to be near one another

in the fight. Each quickly discovered how bravely and boldly the other fought, and that fact, together with the circumstance that they here stood side by side in a battle for life and death, drew them nearer to each other, and banished for a while all hate towards Holmsten out of Leif's mind. They were vexed at the order to go on board with their task unperformed, but obeyed.

When they were safe, Holmsten said: "Listen, Leif; let us take a pair of the smallest and swiftest ships, and make a trip on our own account along the coast."

Leif immediately agreed. Haasten bade them do as they liked, but to be careful not to be too long away. But Ingolf gave his vote against the expedition.

"Let the boys amuse themselves a little," Haasten said, with a smile. "It will do them good. They fight smartly by themselves. And we will give them some good men." Since Haasten promised that the other ships should follow them as soon as a great part of the enemy's forces had dispersed in order to follow the two game-cocks' movements, Ingolf yielded, although with reluctance.

When the chiefs on shore saw two small ships separate themselves from the fleet and sail away, they believed that it was a stratagem, and dispatched only a small force from the place to keep an eye on them. Haasten had reckoned on this, and now Ingolf's anxiety was partly quieted.

Leif and Holmsten sailed up along the coast, and succeeded in landing. But they had no experience in drawing up men for battle, and when the land forces sent to watch them suddenly attacked, there was no



order among their men. There followed a confused struggle which soon developed into a number of single combats, man against man. Leif was opposed by an older fighter than himself, who did not leave or afford him the least opening for an attack. He had enough to do to ward off his rapid and heavy blows with shield and sword. Leif already thought that that day would be his last under the sun; he felt a paralysing fear stealing slowly over him and robbing him of strength. He noticed that he had become wet down to his legs, which had begun to shake violently, and shame and fear concentrated themselves to a wild frenzy in his soul. He suddenly saw red. If he were to fall, his opponent should at any rate carry away marks of the battle. He flung away sword and shield, and took hold of his battle-ax. How he killed the other he never understood, but at last he had him stretched flat on the ground. He picked up his sword and shield, completely out of breath, and shaking in his whole body, and looked around for a new opponent. Not far away the leader of the land-force was exchanging powerful blows with Holmsten. Holmsten had had his shield hewn in pieces, but there seemed to be something the matter with his opponent's sword. When Leif had stood for a moment looking on, his eye fell on a man who was approaching Holmsten from behind with uplifted ax. It was impossible for Leif to get near in time, but purely instinctively he grasped his spear, and as instinctively hesitated a moment before throwing it. Holmsten's head cloven by an ax was what he in his heart longed to see. But it was as impossible to let it happen as it was desirable. It

must not happen! The spear whistled through the air, and a man with lifted ax fell over on his face just behind Holmsten's back. Holmsten's opponent had become aware that something was happening, and became for a moment off his guard. Holmsten took advantage of that moment, drove his sword into his stomach, and thrust hard. The other tottered and fell, with the greatest astonishment in his distorted face. And now that their leader had fallen, the rest of the force fled. Some of them were cut down while flying. Holmsten and Leif gave themselves no time to draw breath. They ran towards the town, followed by their men. The women and children fled in great confusion when they saw the Vikings approaching. Some of the men wanted to go after them, and Leif felt his heart thump in his breast when he saw the young women flying. Especially one of them, whom he clearly recognized, and who did not seem to be taking very much trouble to escape, and certainly had set her eye upon him, attracted him. But when he heard Holmsten call the men back sharply, he gave up following her. Holmsten was obviously strongly excited, though outwardly quite calm.

"First work, then play!" he commanded, in a tone which permitted no opposition, and the Vikings directed their course further against the deserted town. Holmsten and the other sons of Atle had not bought anything but corn, honey, and wine. What they wanted in the shape of articles of luxury and clothes, they expected to get without further expenditure. It was plain that there was plenty to take in the town. A rich booty of ornaments, silks, clothes, precious stones, and other

similar things was collected in bundles and carried to the waiting ships. When this had been seen to, Holmsten gave as many of his men as he could spare leave to go on shore. Now they could go and flirt with the girls if they liked. Holmsten remained on board and stowed away the booty. So Leif could not manage to go on shore, though he greatly wanted to see what was up there in the wood.

When sunset approached, and it began to be evening, Holmsten told Leif to go on shore and blow the signal with the horn for the crews to go on board. They had collected plenty of booty, and there was nothing more to wait for. Now they had been long enough on shore. Leif had from the ship marked a little height which lay apart, and from which the horn could be heard far around. Upon it he meant to stand and give the signal. The ascent to the height was covered with low bushes. In one of these bushes Leif's eye fell on a girl. He looked more closely, and knew her again. Her eye was soft and timid, and she was very young. Leif forgot what he had gone for, and remained with her. He cooled his hot face in the profusion of her dark hair, and lost himself. First he was taken with her extravagant wildness; then he was scared, and rapidly cooled off. When he left her, she wept. Leif went slowly farther up the ascent. When he reached the top, he set the horn to his mouth and blew hard. Its tones reverberated angrily over the landscape. Leif was depressed in mind by disappointment and weariness. It was not a pleasant weariness like that after a battle. He had toyed with the British girls, and dared not think

of Helga. The remembrance of Helga was like a wound in his soul — a wound which he dared not touch lest he should tear it open. It must have time to heal, which it might by forgetfulness. He felt a great relief when they rowed out from the bay and set sail. He never wished to come here again. Up on the height a girl sat and wept. In self-defence he hardened himself. Let her weep! What was it to him? He was not hers, and she had sought him herself.

Holmsten and Leif were greeted with loud shouts of joy when they returned to the fleet. They gave an account of the battle, showed their booty, and reaped much praise. When Haasten and Ingolf heard that Leif had saved Holmsten's life, they exchanged a look, and were both very glad. Haasten praised Leif for his prowess in battle, and it was a great honour to be praised aloud by Haasten. But it gave Leif little pleasure now. His unstable mind had lost its balance. Now he wished that he had never thrown the spear. Ingolf was not long in discovering that a change had taken place in his brother. He knew Leif, and guessed the reason. A long sea voyage would be the best for Leif now, he thought, and he induced Haasten to alter his plan and to sail first to a place on the Irish coast which he knew lay far away. Haasten complied willingly. He had been successful in trading, and had secured a rich booty. Perhaps it was the most prudent course not to visit at once the nearest coasts. It was never certain what connections there might be between the different chiefs of the district. So they hoisted sail and directed their course towards Ireland.

It was soon evident that Ingolf's insight was correct with regard to what Leif needed to restore his mind to its balance again.

They encountered a lively summer storm in the channel. That was beneficial. The warmth and the fine weather had begun to make the crews somewhat slack.

The sea journey ventilated Leif's mind. He again became his former self: a young Viking with desire for adventures of all kinds and an insatiable thirst to see new lands and to exchange blows with foreign chiefs.

### III

The Vikings travelled far that summer. From England they sailed to Ireland, past the Isle of Man, whose cliff-lined coast they could only salute on that journey. Later on they meant to renew and deepen their acquaintanceship with it.

They had successful trade with Ireland. Leif saw many new things which he could not resist. Ingolf looked after the purchase of corn, honey, wine, wheat, and the more useful articles of metal for both of them.

Atle's sons were excellent traders. At first they made considerably more out of their goods than the sworn brothers. But Ingolf gave close attention to their proceedings, and learnt the art from them. And when he had learnt all that Atle's sons could do in the matter of trade, he did not remain stationary at that point. He developed himself further on his own account. Instead of doing trade in single articles, he be-

gan to deal with considerable quantities. This brought in greater gains. Soon the sons of Atle had something to learn from him.

The five Viking leaders had remained on the best terms together. Haasten, with his self-control and sense of fairness, was distinctly marked out as leader. Leif had still fits of hatred towards Holmsten and of ill-humour towards the other brothers, but he kept his temper under restraint. And whenever they encountered foes he became, as it were, at once their brother, and fought bravely on their side.

He much admired Atle's sons' skill in handling their weapons and their composure in battle. They fought as coolly and calmly as if nothing at all serious was intended. Only when they attacked was a certain excitement apparent. An attack by one of Atle's sons meant generally a swift death for the opponent. They played, to be sure, but there was seriousness in their play. It meant nothing less than life or death.

Leif was greatly taken by the immovable calm with which they let their weapons talk. He did not understand how they could fight and yet at the same time be as it were spectators. He understood Ingolf's method of fighting much better.

Ingolf attacked at once with his full strength and remained steadily on the offensive. His figure seemed to increase in weight. His blows clove shields, and his thrust penetrated where it struck. He never let himself be forced into a defensive attitude, but attacked fiercely, though always under control. His mode of fighting was not so supercilious as that of Atle's sons;

he gave himself more away, but preserved his composure. This quietness and assurance of Ingolf and Atle's sons remained a riddle for Leif. For him, composure in battle would have meant simply death. He handled his weapons very awkwardly till he began to see red. From that moment he became so sure in his use of them that it was a pleasure to watch him. But he fought unconsciously, and did not know what had happened before his opponent lay prone. Then for the first time he took breath and collected himself. It was fine to see him, when he let himself go, tall and disorderly, crouching in the indomitable display of his strength. It seemed easy to take his life, and as if his enemy had it in his hand. Leif did not care how many openings he gave his opponent. But it was not easy to take advantage of these openings, for he never remained long in one place. He danced round his enemy, confused him with his apparent want of plan in attack, and pierced or slashed him before he was aware. Haasten enjoyed watching Leif fight. He insisted that Leif was invincible, for he was so thoroughly absorbed in the battle that even a superior opponent must give way before his waspish attack. "Leif could only be killed by accident — only a mistletoe branch could strike him," Haasten said. He came to be quite fond of Leif.

The Viking expedition sailed farther along the coasts of Ireland, and Leif was fascinated with the remarkable country he found there. Ireland, that unquiet, ever-changing land, appealed in a peculiarly intimate degree to his heart. Every time that he thought he knew it, he discovered that he did not. He was continually

coming across something new. Wild, stony tracts were suddenly succeeded by fertile plains. Desert heaths, dark woods, narrow valleys with black rivers at the bottom, friendly coasts, rugged lines of cliff, peaceful towering mountains, placid lakes, roaring rivers — all these Ireland had. Most wonderful of all, perhaps, were the abruptly changing lights. Ireland had its own sky, full of whims like itself, rapidly changing from lofty pure blue depths to a watery layer of clouds over the land. There might be a blazing festival of sunshine over the landscape, and the next moment it was overshadowed by heavy masses of cloud. A tract of country which had been like a brilliant smile was suddenly completely changed, and became dark and threatening, filled with a special sense of discomfort, deep and unescapable as a dream. Ireland played with one's heart, filled it with joy, to oppress it the next moment with fear and foreboding.

And Ireland's people were like Ireland's land and light. They were wild men whose soul was a mixture of gentle dreaminess and fierce rage. People who devoted themselves to fighting with their whole soul and did not know how to give or expect quarter. Their polite friendliness, nay, even brotherliness, in peaceful intercourse stood in glaring contrast to the savagery in battle and their cruelty towards fallen or captive enemies. They could amuse themselves by opening a man's stomach and letting him wind the entrails out of his body by leading him round a tree. They counted that a delightful amusement, and their gaiety was enhanced if the captive groaned. They were a nation of singular



enthusiasts, bards and warriors, swarthy or red-haired, and alternately irascible or quiet.

Never in his life had Leif seen so many remarkably beautiful women as he did here. There were women with rich red hair, soft gleaming skins, quiet and inviting beings. They aroused his longing. There were also dark women, who were in themselves not less taking. Their pale skins and dark eyes filled Leif's dreams. There were other dark women with golden skin, pliant and slender. There was abundance of women of all complexions, and nearly all were beautiful.

The Vikings were enthusiastic about them, but their enthusiasm was moderated by the fact that the women carried daggers hidden in their clothes, so that now and then there was only a step between love and death. Generally speaking, the Vikings were not unpopular among the Irish women. And not seldom an originally loose connection between a Norwegian chief and an Irish girl developed into marriage.

Besides these people, the Vikings in Ireland came across another type still more savage in manners and shape, with tattooed bodies. It was a matter for astonishment to see the contrast between the land and the people. The sworn brothers and Atle's sons traded and ravaged far and wide in Ireland and the British Isles that summer. On the whole, they had had good luck, made good trade, taken much booty, and only lost few men. The last was especially due to Haasten's wise moderation and always vigilant foresight.

Haasten had often since employed the stratagem, which had succeeded so well the first time, of sending

Leif and Holmsten out on a foray with two of the smallest ships, while the rest of the fleet detained the land defenders at another spot. Holmsten and Leif both equally enjoyed these excursions. And as they always took the best men with them, their expeditions generally succeeded, and brought in rich booty.

Once, however, it had nearly gone hard with them. A Swedish Viking-fleet consisting of five well-manned ships came across them as they were rowing out of a bay, where their ships had lain while they made a foray on shore. The Swedes inspected them a little, and thought that they could make use both of the ships and of what might be found on board. So they hoisted their battle-flag and set after them. Leif and Holmsten were obliged to accept battle with the superior forces of the enemy. It was impossible to escape. They cleared their ships for the combat, determining not to surrender. But before the battle had begun, the other ships came rowing round a neighbouring promontory. Leif and Holmsten had been longer away than usual that time, and Haasten, and especially Ingolf, had at last become uneasy, and determined to go and look after them.

When the Swedes saw the other ships approaching, and perceived that they were many and large, they turned sharp round and rowed away as rapidly as possible, but the wind was slack and unreliable, and the Swedes were lucky to find a fog-bank, which they ran into and escaped. When this happened, the summer was already approaching its end. The Vikings had by that time sold all that they had brought with them from

home, and were well provided with foreign goods of every kind. There was really nothing more to wait for.

The sea began to awake gradually from its summer lethargy. It was plainly shown by the ships' movements that the waves were already aware of the approach of winter.

The ships were all heavily laden. And as they were warships they were not very well adapted for voyaging in the autumn. So the Vikings sailed home over the sea, the same way as they had come, under the colourless skies of late summer by day and the clear golden stars by night.

They had prosperous winds, and reached Norway about the time that the leaves were beginning to fall.

Leif was full of longing for Helga during the voyage home. He counted the days and could not sleep. It seemed to him suddenly that in the course of the summer she had come very close to him. Absence and separation had, as it were, intimately united them. His longing, however, was considerably mingled with fear — a fear without shape or distinct substance, yet none the less painful.

At Hisargavl, Atle's sons took leave of Ingolf and Leif. They thanked each other for the summer they had spent together, arranged to meet there next summer, drank each other's health in dark wine from glass goblets, and swore eternal friendship. Ingolf and Leif invited Atle's sons to come to the feast the first day of the month of Goi, with as large a retinue as they liked to bring, and Atle's sons promised to come. Holmsten, half-intoxicated, happened to mention Helga's name,

and Leif listened with all his ears. But for the rest he could make nothing out of Holmsten's confused talk, except that he now knew that Helga was in his thoughts.

That evening Leif threw a spear overboard. So the sworn brothers and Atle's sons parted, and each sailed home with the rich booty of the summer.

#### IV

Helga awoke in the night and heard the sound of oars in the fjord. She dressed hastily and went down to the landing-place. It was full moon, but the sky was covered with dark masses of clouds. Out on the dark surface of the fjord the ships looked black and ghostly. A sudden fear made Helga's heart tremble. The ships came rowing so silently in the night. The stroke of the oars sounded so lonely in the stillness. Was Leif with them? She counted the ships and found they were not the full number. But she could not distinguish them clearly, and the larger ones might overshadow the smaller. How silently they rowed! Would it not be better if she went home to bed? That would be where she would lie if she came to know that she would no more see Leif. She would never wish to get up again. The foremost ship rowed into the somewhat broken moonlight on the surface of the fjord. Helga thought she could recognize it. Was that not Leif's dragon? She strained her eyes till they smarted, and ran down to the edge of the water. The ship over there was so dark and indistinct she could make out neither colour nor shape.

It glided nearer like a shadow. The water dripped in silvery drops from the oar-blades.

A rift in the masses of clouds let the moon's pale light illumine the shore. Helga stood in it thinking intently. Was Leif with them? That would be an almost incomprehensible happiness. And even if he were, still there would come a day when his ship would return without him, or his people would come some winter day carrying him on a bier, and there would be blood upon the snow. A time must come when Leif would be no more. Then she must die.

Helga stood there bathed in the wan light of the moon, and gave herself away to her last breath. She embraced Leif with her soul, alive or dead. When the ships came quite near she stepped quickly into the shadow of one of the boat-houses. She would see if Leif was with them before she made a mistake.

Rapidly the ships approached, rowed by long oars, keeping regular time. Yes, the foremost was Leif's dragon-ship. Majestically it glided over the water, and there — yes, there on the poop stood Leif. Ah, Leif! Leif! Helga wept. She wept and was happy. But she quickly dried her eyes. See how Leif had exerted himself. He wished to be the first on shore. She could hear the excited tone of his voice when he gave the order: "Inboard!" Leif was impatient now; his movements were abrupt and hasty. He urged on his crew, and his voice became sharp. He could not wait — he could never wait the last moments. Leif! Leif! He did not guess that she stood there.

Helga did not go out of the shadow and down to the

ship. She saw the crew working with the long boat-hooks and pushing the landing-plank out over the ship's side. She could just catch a glimpse of a man who went down it. And then came Leif running. How like him it was. When he was right opposite her, she went forward to meet him. Leif started, stopped, and stood. All his impetuosity ceased.

"Could you not see me?" asked Helga, with a smile that quivered. She felt so rich and happy, and came gradually nearer. Leif was not in a condition to answer or to say a word at all. He stood there, and that was all he could do. He could not even collect himself and kiss her. Helga came slowly close up to him and laid her arms quietly round his neck. They drank a long kiss from each other's mouths till their lips were sore.

Leif wished to say something, but there was a lump in his throat. When he discovered that, he began to weep. Helga smiled and kissed him more fervently. Her fearless Viking was only a long, ungainly boy who wept. He stood and embraced Helga violently but helplessly, and tears ran down his freckled, weather-tanned cheeks. Helga turned gently in his embrace. He thought she wished to be released, and let her go. But Helga did not wish to be out of his arms. She only wished to turn so that they might walk side by side. She did not wish that any one should find them there, and led him away. She wanted to have him for herself now that she had at last got him again after an endless summer. And Leif let her have her way; he had forgotten everything else except that he had her again.

They did not talk much. Only some hasty questions and quiet, hasty answers were exchanged between them. They had, as it were, no time for more talk. There was silence between them—a good and happy silence. They had each other.

In the house there was great excitement. Morning broke on an apparently hopeless confusion of men and women, who chatted together, kissed, or only sent each other embarrassed and happy glances. There were also children of all ages who jumped and sang and quarrelled together in little private combats, and men who carried loads from the ships to the house, and sauntered back again in knots, talking vigourously.

Ingolf went quietly to and fro and saw that the work was done. The ships had to be unloaded and the goods carried home to the house, and it was best to get it done soon. At this time of year the weather and the sea were not to be relied upon. Ingolf felt a sense of happiness and confidence at being home again. He relaxed a little the strict discipline which he generally maintained in all work, and granted each man sufficient time for embracing friends and for confidential talk. But if any one did not go to work of his own accord, when a reasonable time had passed, he called him by name in a friendly way and aroused him. No more was needed. The work went on vigourously. The men wanted it done as soon as possible. Ingolf had promised them a few days' holiday when the goods were in the house and the ships in the sheds.

Orn came out, bent and aged, blinking with inflamed eyes in the garish light of morning. He gave such an

immense yawn that his shaggy jaws cracked and shivered, chilled by the cold autumnal air. Old age had come upon him, bent his back, and gnawed the flesh from his limbs. When Ingolf saw him, he hastened to him. Now that he saw him again, after not having had him daily before his eyes for several months, he suddenly realized how old and decrepit his father had actually become, and was seized by a strong feeling of sympathy. He whispered something as he passed in a man's ear. The man smiled and nodded, and ran down to the ships. Then Ingolf hastened to his father and greeted him with reverence and tenderness.

The old man was always on his guard against too much friendliness. Old age had increased his mistrust of people. He was peevish and gruff. He returned his son's greeting very nonchalantly, and began with noticeable haste to question him concerning purely practical matters. Had he all the ships with him? How much had he allowed himself to be cheated? He had not, it was to be hoped, brought an Irish wife home with him? How many of his men had fallen? He had probably nothing creditable to report?

It seemed to Ingolf that his voice had become remarkably high-pitched and strident.

And when Ingolf had answered, the old man repeated his questions time after time. It suddenly occurred to Ingolf that his father could no longer hear as well as before. He had to raise his voice, and he found it trying and embarrassing to have to change it. Orn noticed the change, and shouted: "Yes, I no longer hear so well. It is especially this ear here which is



affected. But it is worse with Rodmar! He is alive still. But he has gone blind!" Orn laughed with a snort. "That is still worse!" His laughter filled Ingolf with discomfort. Then Orn suddenly stopped laughing. He had happened to cast a glance down towards the ships. Now he stood, his glance became fixed, and his eyes widened. Then he suddenly began to count and point at the same time with a crooked finger. "One, two, three . . ."

When he had counted up to twenty, he broke off and said to Ingolf, with a voice trembling with joyful emotion: "How many are there altogether?" Ingolf smiled. "There are many," he answered, in a friendly tone. "I took care that you should not want wine, father."

From the landing-place below there came a long line of men up towards the house, each one trundling a barrel. As though guided by his sense of smell, Rodmar came at the same moment tottering out of the house, supported on two sticks, and carefully feeling his way forward with his legs. Orn turned towards him, and shouted in a high and excited voice: "Now the barrels of red wine from the land of the Franks are coming in a long line rolling up to the house, Cousin Rodmar!"

"Ah, my eyes!" answered Rodmar, in a trembling and weak voice. "Gladly would I have seen that sight. But keep silent, so that I can at any rate hear the wine slopping inside the barrels!"

There was a great restlessness in Orn's blood. He took short steps, and could not stand still. With his

crooked fingers he took hold of Ingolf's cloak, drew him down towards him, and gave him a hasty kiss on his forehead. Then he tottered on stiff legs up to Rodmar and clapped him on the shoulder with a trembling hand. "I cannot hear, and you cannot see, cousin. But let us thank Odin that we can both still taste. Isn't your tongue dry with knowing that there is so much wine close by? Mine rolls in my mouth like birch-bark."

It was not long before the two aged kinsmen sat side by side in the high-seat and tasted for the first time the red wine from the land of the Franks, which they had been waiting for during a whole long summer. They drank the wine noisily, let it fill their mouths, and tasted it with satisfaction.

"How do you like it?" asked Orn between gulps. Rodmar gave himself barely time to answer. "It tastes good," he answered hastily, and drank, "but I miss seeing the colour."

"Splash a little in your eyes, cousin," Orn answered, and laughed.

There they sat, and became very cheerful later in the day. Long before the sun went down they were asleep, and snoring loudly. Drink had come to Dalsfjord.

Not till towards evening did Ingolf find Leif and Helga. Ingolf embraced Helga, and kissed her with much tenderness. "Are you pleased with all the gifts, sister?" he asked, with a smile.

Helga looked with wide-open eyes first at him and then at Leif. Then she smiled without comprehension and a little uncertainty. Leif looked unhappy. "I

quite forgot them," he stammered, blushing and embarrassed.

Ingolf laughed loud and heartily. But Helga threw her arms round Leif's neck and kissed him tenderly before the eyes of her brother.

## V

There was a chief and Viking named Olmod the Old, son of Horda-Kaare. He was a kinsman of Leif.

Olmod the Old was popular with all. He was a wise man, quiet and circumspect, a warrior in battle and a hero where drinking-horns were emptied. No one would have guessed that Olmod the Old concealed a great restlessness under the mask of quiet and imperturbability which he outwardly wore. He talked willingly, and had a flow of cheerful conversation, but was not lavish with his confidence. All thought that they knew his mind, but no one did.

Olmod the Old seldom remained long in one place. In the summer he went on Viking expeditions; in winter he was a guest in various places. He had many friends, and wherever he stayed he brought cheerfulness with him.

He was very fond of his kinsman, Leif, whose character resembled his own. It was a significant fact about Olmod that Leif was unaware that he possessed a friend in him. Leif would have been rather inclined to believe the opposite. Olmod seldom talked to him, gave him no presents, did not show him favour or friendship in

any degree. But in secret Olmod kept an eye on his kinsman, Leif, and knew all about his affairs.

That winter Olmod visited Atle Jarl at Gaulum. In doing so he fulfilled an old promise. He knew that Leif and Ingolf had been on a Viking expedition with Atle's sons the previous summer. It had suddenly occurred to him that he knew Atle's sons too little.

During his visit to Gaulum, Olmod gave such close attention to Atle's sons that he actually came to overhear a conversation between Haersten and Holmsten which they did not intend him or any one else to hear.

"I hear that Helga and Leif are fond of each other," said Haersten.

"That sounds hard to believe," answered Holmsten.

"Women's taste is often strange," continued Haersten. "Did you see, also, brother, that Leif threw a spear overboard at Hisargavl?"

"Why did you not tell me that before?"

"Because it has only just occurred to me that Leif regretted the use he had once made of that spear."

"With my good will I shall not give Leif reason to deprive himself of many more weapons," said Holmsten gloomily. "It would be rather after my mind to take care that he finds full use for all his weapons."

Olmod had heard enough. Now he knew what Leif's friends were. Shortly after overhearing this conversation he departed. He directed his way towards Orn's house, and was welcomed by Orn and the brothers. When he had stayed a week in the house, he prepared to go farther. Before doing so, he talked confidentially with Ingolf.

“Don’t take it ill if I mix in your affairs, Ingolf. I begin to get old, and old men are talkative. I only wish to remind you that Atle’s sons, whom you and Leif have invited to the feast this winter, are powerful chiefs, and that it will be advisable for you to show them all possible honour — among other things, by inviting as many of your kinsfolk and friends to the feast as you can.” Ingolf remained silent after Olmod had spoken. He looked attentively at him. Olmod met his look with a smile. His smile was quiet and experienced. Ingolf became suddenly aware that he had more than a guest in Olmod.

“You come from Gaulum,” he said in a low tone and thoughtfully. “Is that your advice?”

“That is my advice,” answered Olmod, with a firmness in his voice which left no doubt as to his seriousness. And he added, as though casually: “Haasten is only *one* of Atle’s sons.”

“Have you talked with Leif on this subject?” Ingolf asked suddenly.

Olmod the Old said only: “I know my kinsman, Leif. And I know you, too, Ingolf.”

Ingolf gave Olmod some handsome presents on his departure and escorted him part of the way.

On the first day of the month of Goi, Atle’s sons came with a large retinue to Orn’s house. Ingolf had followed Olmod the Old’s advice, and invited a large circle of his own and Leif’s friends to the feast for Atle’s sons. When Haasten saw how many were invited to the feast, he said to Ingolf, with a smile: “We sons of Atle are not accustomed to receive our friends with such a great

force." Ingolf looked at him and answered seriously: "One can never show one's friends too great an honour, Haasten."

Haasten became silent and thoughtful. Involuntarily he looked at his brothers. They stood there talking confidentially together. There was something in their bearing which made Haasten uneasy. He noticed also that Ingolf was watching his brothers. Haersten and Holmsten had withdrawn themselves from the rest, and stood whispering together.

"We have never been received in such a magnificent way here before," said Haersten, with a smile. "There must be something behind it."

"I should not be surprised," answered Holmsten, "if Olmod the Old had been here. Where did he go to when he left us? It occurs to me all at once that his bearing was different when he left than when he came."

"What can Olmod the Old have told any here?" asked Haersten thoughtfully.

"Something which he possibly heard," replied Holmsten dryly.

"What will you do now, brother?"

"I don't know yet. But some time Leif shall come to miss the spear which he threw overboard at Hisargavl!"

Orn became quite another man as soon as guests came to the house. He livened up and became young again. He did not gulp down his wine, but drank deep and was none the worse for it. He was still capable of filling the high-seat with dignity and of presiding over a festival.

Rodmar, on the other hand, preferred to remain in bed when anything unusual was going on. The restless-

ness which the sound of many voices produced in his state of blindness made him unwell. When he could not sit quite peacefully with Orn he liked best to be alone with his wine.

Orn beckoned Haasten to a place beside him on the high-seat. Outside it he seated the other sons of Atle and the sworn brothers, and then the remaining guests according to their age and rank. When the guests had taken their seats the hall was completely filled. Orn set great store by such feasts. He liked sitting as chief in his hall. He stinted neither food nor drink. It filled him with inward satisfaction to see people eat and drink and be merry.

He became cheerful and resumed something of his old dignity.

The fire burnt pleasantly on the flat stone of the hearth. When the guests at last were satisfied, the bowls and wooden dishes were carried out, and the real drinking festival began. The youngest and handsomest women in the house went about in festal attire and poured out beer. Among them was Helga. She served at the high table. Holmsten's eyes followed her wherever she went and stood. He had never shown his liking for her so openly.

Helga could not help noticing his persistent gaze. It made her afraid. She would rather have remained away from the hall, but, on the other hand, she dared not leave Leif out of her sight. Leif sat with his mouth compressed and a gloomy expression in his eyes, and drank but little. That was not his usual way at a feast; he was accustomed to drink rather too much

than too little. Only seldom did Helga succeed in catching his eye. He did not return her smile. She went to and fro in great alarm. She took care never to look at Holmsten, and she did not smile at him as at the others when she filled his horn.

Holmsten pretended not to notice it. His eye glowed with the same warmth, and his look followed her with the same persistence about the hall.

Orn proposed the toasts to the gods. He was still equal to emptying horns in their honour. When he proposed the toast of Brage, Holmsten rose and struck on his horn. "It is the custom of high-born men," he said in a loud and cheerful voice, "to make vows when Brage's toast is called. I have a vow to make which I will beg you kind friends to witness."

Holmsten stopped and looked round him. He caught a warning and slightly anxious look from his brother, Haasten. He saw Leif's bowed head and caught a glimpse of his serious face; he saw Ingolf's face grow rigid with quiet expectation. And he saw Helga standing anxious and uncertain and looking at Leif.

Holmsten smiled. For a while he stood with his burning gaze fixed upon Helga, as though waiting to catch her eye. Then he lifted his horn and said in loud tones: "I make this vow with Brage's toast, that I will marry Helga, daughter of Orn, or no other woman." There was silence in the hall. Helga remained standing still for a while. She looked intently at Leif, and saw the blood mount to his face and his shaking fingers grip the foot of the horn. When she



saw that he would succeed in controlling himself, she silently left the hall, her face very pale.

Haasten had sprung up from his place when Holmsten made his vow, but had sat down again without saying anything. Ingolf sat with a smile on his face but a look in his blue eyes that was as sharp as a knife. Orn smiled graciously at Holmsten, and Haersten laughed contentedly.

At last Leif looked up. There was a hard and hostile look in his usually cheerful eyes. He looked slowly round, and let his glance dwell for a while on each of Atle's sons, and finally on his sworn brother, Ingolf, as if he were considering him especially. He looked almost as if he would not be sorry to encounter them all at once should that be necessary. To Orn he only vouchsafed a hasty and contemptuous glance.

Holmsten quite understood the effect his words had produced on each of those whom his speech concerned. He looked round with composure and continued cheerfully: "Now I have begun this game. Now it is your turn, friend Ingolf."

Ingolf gave no sign of rising. He turned his face towards Haasten and said in a quiet and firm voice which was heard over the whole hall: "It seems to me it is now Haasten's turn to continue the game. He is our leader, and the wisest of us all besides."

Haasten met his look and rose slowly. He did not find words at first, and remained standing silent for a while, looking down. A hush of expectation spread in the hall. When Haasten at last spoke his voice was

quiet and troubled. "I make the vow," he said, "that I will judge justly and impartially, if a judgment should ever be demanded from me."

Haasten sat down with a melancholy air after speaking. Holmsten said cheerfully: "Your obscure vow does not seem to me to bear out the assertion that you are the wisest of us all. How will you act, if it is between your friends on one side and your enemies on the other that you must pronounce judgment?"

Haasten answered in a severe and discouraging tone: "That I intend myself to determine."

Ingolf rose. He smiled no longer; his look was serious and his tone firm and quiet. "With Brage's toast I make the vow that I will not divide my inheritance with any one but my sworn brother, Leif. May all bright gods and all good people present hear it." When Orn had heard that vow, he rose with some difficulty. Suddenly he seemed very old. The look which he cast at Ingolf was not friendly. In gloomy silence he left the hall.

Holmsten was still cheerful. "I don't understand that vow," he said, and laughed.

"It is not difficult to understand," answered Haasten severely. "Ingolf will give his sister, Helga, to Leif, and no one else."

Holmsten laughed incredulously, and looked at Leif in challenge.

Leif rose awkwardly with a jerk, and stood erect. "I make the vow," he said in a voice that shook with suppressed anger and emotion, "to show that in noth-

ing do I stand behind my ancestors and other good men of my race!"

"That may be an easy vow to keep," shouted Haersten. "Have you forgotten that your grandfather had to leave Telemarken like a criminal?"

Leif met Ingolf's look and controlled himself. Ingolf rose slowly. He was just as quiet as before, but those who knew him could see that now he was angry. He directed his words to Haasten. "When I invited you, Atle's sons, to this feast, I believed that you were my own and my brother Leif's sincere friends. From what has happened here this evening, and from the words which have fallen, I can see that I have made a mistake — not as far as concerns you, Haasten, but your brothers. Holmsten has done us a doubtful honour. His whole behaviour does not show exactly such an attitude towards us brothers that I should like to have him as a brother-in-law — even if no one else were in the way. As regards Haersten, he has spoken insulting words against my family here in the hall. You, Haasten, will always be welcome in the place which you now occupy as my guest and friend. But your brothers I cannot ask to remain. Only with my friends will I continue this feast."

Haersten and Holmsten had sprung up from their places. Haasten also rose. "I had no share in, and could not prevent, what has happened this evening," he said quietly, and in a tone of sadness, "otherwise it would not have happened. But I cannot remain here as your guest, Ingolf, when you send my brothers

away. We, Atle's sons, have always kept together."

When he had spoken, he left the hall silently, followed by his brothers and all their retinue. But no one else followed them on the way.

When they had gone, Ingolf set guards on all the roads. He wished to be prepared, in case any more surprises awaited him on the part of Atle's sons. It had become clear to him now that Haasten had no longer such complete power over his brothers as before.

Ingolf was depressed in spirits. That which he had long feared had happened at last. But this breach with Atle's sons had come in another way than he had thought. He had expected that Leif would be a direct cause of it, not, as now appeared, an indirect one. Leif had surprised him by his self-controlling bearing. Now he knew he had a brother in Leif he could completely rely on. Ingolf guessed that it was not the first time that Leif for his sake had controlled himself in the presence of Atle's sons. But, on the other hand, he could not betray Leif. He must stand by his side anywhere, and against any one — even against Haasten, if necessary. Ingolf observed, to his wonder, that he did not really miss Atle's sons, now that he was confronted by a breach with them. He had Leif; he had on his side only one man. But that was a man he could rely upon, and knew that he could. Ingolf felt himself in some degree richer than before.

## VI

For some days after the feast, which had been so abruptly broken off, Orn did not speak to any one. A cloud hung over his face. His look was like that of a mad bull. He ignored Ingolf entirely; and if Ingolf tried to talk to him, he paid no more attention to what he said than to a breath of wind. Even the blind Rodmar spoke in vain to his kinsman. To Rodmar it seemed that the world had become very strange. Did Orn not hear when he spoke to him? Had he become deaf, or perhaps dumb also? He gave up trying to make it out. He did not like trouble of any kind any more. There was always the resource of lying in bed and having wine brought. Rodmar retired deeper into his darkness and drank himself into a state of stupor and oblivion. When Orn had carried about his fit of wrath in solitude long enough, he began to get tired. Wrath also disturbed his intoxication. He did not find the same happiness in wine as before. He considered the matter closely, and found a new standpoint to view it from — a more manly and less troublesome one.

He sent for Ingolf. "I understand well," he began in a harsh but not unfriendly tone, "that you do not wish to let yourself be cowed by Atle's sons. I have considered the matter, and I must confess that it was a very challenging way that Holmsten chose in which to appear as a suitor. It was, however, impossible for him to know whether Helga had been already promised in marriage, and how far his vows might cross our plans.

I think that the answer you gave him was good, and becoming a chieftain. We of our race can afford to marry our children to whom we like. We certainly do not need to trouble about marriage with Jarl's sons. It has pleased me to see that you are not afraid to give even such people as Atle's sons the rough side of your tongue. I do not deny that till lately it was my idea that a marriage connection with them would be an honour for our family. But now I see that it is no less honour for the family to refuse such a connection. That shows to all and each that we reckon ourselves at least equal to Jarls. You are wise, my boy. You may go."

It was a long time since Orn had spoken so gently to his son. Ingolf went about the rest of the day smiling now and then to himself. He felt a great relief. His father's attitude had pained him more than he had been willing to admit to himself.

After his conversation with Ingolf, Orn went to Rodmar, who was very glad to observe that he had not become dumb or deaf. A joyous time recommenced for the two kinsmen. They drank copiously of the red wine, and boasted more than ever. It became to them a source of much arrogance that hostility had broken out between their sons and Atle Jarl's. They even took Leif into favour, and willingly listened to his account of his exploits in the Viking expedition of the previous summer. Leif was in their eyes still a little, loose-minded fellow, but at any rate a man. One could acknowledge him both as a son and a son-in-law. He had

split various heads, and saved Holmsten's life. There one had a proof that even the worst good-for-nothings could become something if only they had good folk to look up to.

Leif was ungracious enough to care for their praise no more than he had cared for their blame. But they behaved magnanimously to him in that respect. They excused him by recollecting youth's general want of proper respect for age.

When spring approached, the old uneasiness came over Leif. He became very restless, and his eyes took an absent expression. One day he went down to the boat-houses and began to inspect his ships. As he did so, it suddenly came into his mind that during the last part of the winter Ingolf had not troubled himself at all about goods for the summer's Viking expedition. It was not like Ingolf to forget a thing of that kind.

Without delay he sought Ingolf and began to speak on the subject. Ingolf stood and looked attentively at him while he spoke. When he had finished, Ingolf answered with composure: "It seems to me, Cousin Leif, that it would be better for us to remain at home in our house during the summer than to sail out on a Viking expedition. Do you remember the vows which were made here in the winter at the feast we gave to Atle's sons?"

"The vows were not of the kind to be hastily forgotten," answered Leif, and looked in his brother's eyes. "You are, I suppose, not afraid of meeting Atle's sons on the sea?"

“I am not afraid,” answered Ingolf, in a sharper tone; “but I would rather avoid hostility with Atle’s sons.”

Leif stood and looked down gloomily. When he had considered a little he said: “Atle’s sons could easily suppose that we were afraid if, after what happened here in the winter, we gave up the Viking expeditions we had planned for the summer. I do not intend to give Holmsten reason to call me afraid. Do you, brother, decide for yourself what you will do. I shall go.”

Ingolf was silent and considered the matter. He was in great perplexity. He hardly dared to let Leif go. On the other hand, he dared not hinder him either. He knew well that when Leif had once got restless he must get away. For himself, he did not like to run the risk of meeting Atle’s sons. He had a presentiment that a collision was inevitable if their way crossed that of his brother. And in any case he wished to avoid lifting hand against Haasten. But the reason which especially kept him at home was, that he no longer trusted Haersten and Holmsten. If both he and Leif went away, they might both use the opportunity to carry off Helga. On such an occasion both his father and Rodmar might easily lose their lives, or be exposed to indignities which he would have to avenge. When Ingolf had come to a conclusion, he said: “I do not wish as matters now stand to leave our family and property without someone to look after them. I will no longer prevent your going since you have set your mind upon it. But it will cause me great anxiety to know that you are out on a Viking expedition with only three ships. For I cannot



spare more men away from home. You may encounter Atle's sons, you may meet other hostile Vikings, or you may through want of foresight get involved in an unequal battle. I would rather, therefore, that you stayed at home, Cousin Leif. But if you will promise me not under any circumstances to engage in an unequal battle, as far as it is in your power to avoid it, I will not oppose your going."

Leif promised that willingly. He never thought about promises. He grasped Ingolf's outstretched hand and said: "I promise you to proceed cautiously. If I meet with danger or superior force, I will escape as well as I can. You need not be uneasy for my sake, brother."

Ingolf remembered that Leif had kept his word with regard to Atle's sons. There was no longer any reason not to put full trust in Leif's promises, even if, in accordance with his whole character, they were given a little hastily, and apparently without thought. And if only Leif kept his promise, there was no special reason to be anxious about him. In a battle which was not too unequal, he was safe enough, unless the Norns had destined his death, or Odin had marked him out. For against the gods and goddesses of fate the best man fought in vain. When the matter had been thus decided, Leif began seriously to prepare for the journey. The goods which Ingolf had collected at the beginning of winter completely filled three ships. All that remained was to select the crews and to take care to keep the ships fit for sailing.

When Leif told Helga that he was going, she merely

nodded assentingly and smiled at him. But her quivering smile concealed bitter grief and great anxiety. Helga knew Leif — ah! she knew him. This Leif of hers was a man whom no bond could hold. That was his character. And she did not wish to spoil his happiness by seeking to hold him fast. Never should he guess what she suffered when she saw him sail away. Never would she mention her sense of loss and the anxiety she suffered during the time she must be without him. Separation and longing were integral parts of the happiness she shared with Leif. So young Helga smiled bravely and helped Leif with his preparations for the journey, giving him cheerful words on the way. But she never showed him her anxiety, and concealed her grief till she was alone.

One day in spring, when the wind blew freshly over the fjord, Leif sailed away with three ships. He stood on the poop and wondered that he had never thought before how hard it would be to part from Helga.

His old countryman clapped him on the shoulder and said: "On a voyage it is best to keep the salt water outside the ship."

Leif smiled with a wry face. His heart had not yet been hardened. Helga stood on the edge of the shore and saw the striped sails bellying in the breeze. The ships lay slanting on the water. They glided along as if in play, and became so quickly smaller.

Helga stood alone on the shore. All the others who had been down to bid farewell to those departing had gone back again to the house. Helga stood there alone with the breeze. Everything was green and cheerful

around her. Trees stood covered with new leaves, and flowers grew again from the ground. And there sailed Leif, taking the summer away with him.

When Helga could not see the ships any more, she at last gave up. Helplessly she let herself drop down on the young grass. All power had suddenly left her. She could not even weep. She remained lying there long with her heart beating violently.

The day after Leif had sailed, Olmod the Old landed at Orn's house. He had five ships, and was on a Viking expedition. He was able to inform Ingolf that of Atle's sons Haasten was remaining at home that summer. He further said that he had heard that Leif was going alone that summer, and he wished to have joined him. When he heard that Leif had already sailed he hastened to go on, wishing to overtake him.

That spring came young King Harald sailing north along the coast. He had made a vow not to let his hair be cut till he had reduced the whole of Norway to submission, and was therefore by some called Harald Luva, and by others Harald Haarfager. Whatever part of the country he came across, he called his own. Kings and chiefs had to submit with a good or with a bad grace. All men from the lowest to the highest became his tributaries. He made laws, and appointed chiefs over districts to take care that the laws were obeyed. Harald met with no opposition either in the hills or the fjords. All the Jarls became his subjects.

But there were other chiefs who murmured, and considered that Harald paid scant respect to the law and ancient land-rights. These Harald dealt with hardly.

He killed them when he could lay hold of them, and took from them their property without mercy. Many of these chiefs had no other resources, if they wished to preserve their lives and freedom, but to leave the country. They sailed in numbers for the Faroe Islands, the Orkneys, Hjaltland, the Southern Islands, together with the British Isles and Ireland.

King Harald found many a Norwegian neck that preferred to be broken rather than bend. Although himself the most obstinate of all, he would not endure obstinacy in others. There was but one King of Norway, and that King's name was Harald!

## VII

Leif had not sailed long before a great quiet came over him. Alone with the sea, and his own master! No one to obey! No one to consider! That was something to his taste, and under such circumstances there was no room in his heart for care and longing. Successive days awoke him, each with its own voice. Hungry in soul and body he crept each morning out of his sleeping-bag.

It suited his plans to sail to the British Isles; accordingly he was on his way thither. Otherwise he might have sailed to the land far toward the west which a beggar had once told him of. The only objection was that, according to the narrator, there were no people to trade with there and no one to pillage. He was out on a trading and Viking expedition. Besides, it was an ab-

surd country, so entirely without inhabitants. If ever he had time and opportunity he might still wish to take a closer view of it. "Iceland," the beggar had called it, and had prophesied that he should some day see it. He wished to be certain about it, but it lay so far out of the way that he could not well include it in his voyage that summer.

If he did, he ran the risk of being obliged to spend the winter there. And he could not endure the idea of a whole winter without Helga. But he emphasized the fact to himself that if he now let Iceland alone, it was an act of his own free will.

The land out there in the west would not run away, so whether one went there a summer earlier or later was a point of minor importance. Leif, now voyaging alone, came to be quite intimate with the sea. He enjoyed standing at the helm and feeling the ship under his hand. He liked best sailing with all sails spread, and cutting his way through the water as it foamed. It was to him a great delight to sail in such a way that even old and experienced Vikings opened watchful eyes. He tortured his dragon-ship till it seemed to him the sea held its breath, ready to close its foaming jaws round its prey. When he thus kept his ship rocking right on the edge of destruction, clutching the quivering tiller fast in his thin hand, his heart felt light in his breast. He felt himself like a ruler over the sea.

The old Vikings watched Leif closely, and found that they had in him a guide after their own heart. They winked admiringly at each other when he sailed his maddest. His reckless courage filled them with expecta-

tion. They showed great willingness in obeying his wishes and orders. His young voice sounded sharply and pleasantly in their ears.

They took Leif's measure secretly and thoroughly approved of him. Though he was not so strong in body as warriors generally were, yet men with such restless eyes were rare. And the strength he had lay in hard lumps of muscle in the right places. When he greeted or thanked a man he clutched his hand as with an iron claw.

The Vikings found that they had reason to expect an eventful summer with much amusement and many dangers. They thought without regret that some of them might find their way to Odin before this Viking expedition was over. They had not much objection to sitting round the golden-bristled boar, though it should be this very winter.

Meanwhile, Leif had formed a fixed idea that he would show Ingolf he could trade and get on in foreign lands on his own account. Accordingly, when he got there, he showed a caution which was not really according to his own mind, and which the Vikings had not expected. He traded with great foresight, bought chiefly corn and other necessary commodities, including wine and honey. He was also, in pursuance of his promise to Ingolf, cautious with regard to engaging in battle.

His men had expected great things in the direction of depredations on the coast, and were to a certain extent disappointed.

Leif had comparatively few men, and he did not engage in unequal warfare. In order, however, to get

some booty, he practised unexpected attacks with quite a few picked men. With five or six followers he would row ashore in a boat in out-of-the-way spots. If they succeeded in getting on shore unobserved they began to steal forward by remote paths and through deep and dark woods. These were occasions of incredible excitement and secret joy.

It was possible for days and nights to pass without so small a force. And when they had at last found a their finding a place adapted for making an attack with place, a considerable time might pass in watching for an opportunity. But when their well-prepared attack at length took place, it was overwhelming and irresistible. Even old and experienced Vikings had to acknowledge that they had never before taken part in such bold and exciting expeditions. And they loved Leif for the happiness he provided them in their old age. There was constant emulation among Leif's men to get leave to accompany him on these forays. But Leif showed an immovable firmness and foresight in choosing his companions. It was counted a great honour to be among those chosen.

The summer passed in sailing to and fro along the coasts of England and Ireland.

Leif diligently avoided collisions with other Vikings. There were, as a rule, many following him, and he never could be secure from an attack. It was therefore best to exhibit suitable caution. For the rest, he slept peacefully in his bearskin bag at night. Should it happen that he was involved in a fight without his own fault, he had nothing to do with that. In many places

where he came, he found that Haersten and Holmsten had been just before him with their six ships. Leif took no real trouble to overtake them. He remembered his promise to Ingolf, and had resolved to put his trust in chance. Chance had before shown him considerable kindness. But when, towards the close of summer, he directed his course homewards, chance had not yet come to his help. It was therefore with a certain disappointment in his mind that he turned homeward from his summer expedition. It was indeed no small disappointment to him that fate had not allowed him to meet Atle's sons.

Olmod the Old, who, as has been related, was voyaging with a fleet of five ships, made inquiries about his kinsman, Leif, wherever he went. In many places Leif had been just before him, but had sailed again no one knew whither.

Olmod the Old was continually on his scent, and sailed, so to speak, in his wake the whole summer, though without any success in overtaking him. He vowed offerings and gifts to Odin if he would help him to find his kinsman. But Odin seemed to have turned his eyes from him.

Olmod kept himself likewise informed concerning the voyage of Atle's sons. From their movements he could not ascertain whether they intended evil against Leif or not. It did not really look as if they were following him. Perhaps they did not know what direction he was taking, but Olmod considered it best to be on the watch.

Late in the summer, Olmod lost every trace of Leif. But as a compensation he so nearly succeeded in over-



taking Atle's sons that he at last caught a glimpse of their ships making out to sea on their way home. It seemed to Olmod that they were sailing rather early. Were they thinking of concealing themselves among the rocks and islands off the coast and giving Leif a warm reception when he turned home? Olmod the Old was from his own experience not unacquainted with stratagems. He kept a sharp eye on Atle's sons.

For some time he kept his ships hidden in a creek near the ordinary route in order to catch Leif, if possible. At last he could wait no longer. Leif, he thought, must have turned homeward by some other way, and as good sailing weather just then set in, he directed his course towards Norway. He had come to the conclusion that the safest thing was to try to find Atle's sons, or at any rate to get news of them. If he found that they had sailed the direct way home, there was scarcely anything to fear from them that autumn.

On a dark and stormy autumn day, with clouds driving across the sky and a tossing sea, Leif came sailing past Hisargavl. He was sailing along, thinking of his disappointment, when he suddenly found himself surrounded by ships bearing down upon him with their battle-ensigns hoisted. For the sake of his promise, Leif counted the ships; they were six in number. He looked closer at them, and recognized them as those of Atle's sons. Then Leif felt a great contentment fill his mind. Here at last came his friends, the sons of Atle. And luckily all chance of flight was excluded. It would have been vexatious if he had had to break his word, but now it was all right. For Ingolf could not expect

of him that he should surrender unconditionally in order to avoid battle with Atle's sons. He gathered his ships together and commanded them to lower sail; quickly he had boards for defence fixed on the quarter-deck, and cleared the ships for action. He went about and became gradually agitated with excitement and happy expectation. At last — at last the opportunity had come for seriously exchanging blows with Holmsten. One of them should in any case be a guest of Odin that evening. How he was to manage with his three ships against the six of Atle's sons did not worry Leif much.

While he issued his orders, he had only eyes for Holmsten's dragon-ship. There Holmsten came, also in a state of excitement. Now the long boat-hooks could reach the gunwale on Holmsten's ship. "Pull hard, men!" Leif had a great longing to salute Holmsten. The first spear whistled through the air. From both sides it was greeted with cheerful battle cries and gay laughter.

At length the two dragon-ships lay side by side, rocking violently upon the grey sea. Blows and shouts were exchanged above the high quarter-deck boards. Leif pushed his men roughly to one side. He had set eyes on Holmsten. A spear whistled past his ear, and he heard Holmsten laugh and shout: "There is a spear in place of the one you sank here last autumn."

Leif twisted himself to one side, seized the spear, aimed at Holmsten, and sent it back. "I have enough weapons, friend Holmsten! I will test the ax you once gave me on your own skull." Holmsten avoided the spear at the last moment by a leap to one side.

Now Leif was close to the gunwale. The fight went on energetically on both sides of him. The ships reeled violently and crashed noisily against each other. Salt spray concealed now and then the hot faces. Leif held his ax raised and shook it towards Holmsten. "Now, when I cleave your head before long, it will not be through carelessness! Remember that, Holmsten."

Holmsten laughed derisively. He could not properly reach Leif because of his men. "It will double my joy, friend Leif, to know you are lying cold at the bottom of the sea, by the side of your spear, while your friend Helga makes me comfortable."

Leif leaped up on the quarter-deck boards, swinging his ax high over his head, but was forced back. He tried again and again, but was met by a wall of weapons. One of Atle's sons' other ships hooked itself fast on to the other side of the dragon-ship. The battle raged furiously along both gunwales.

During an involuntary pause in the battle, Leif found time to look round him a little. One of his ships was already overpowered, and the other surrounded by three of the enemy's smaller ships; his own was so hard pressed that it was obviously only a question of how long he could hold out.

Leif saw clearly how untenable his position was. He did not envy Atle's sons their victory. He called those who had followed him on many bold expeditions to him, and said in a choked voice: "If we are going to Valhalla, friends, let us take Holmsten with us, and as many of his men as we can!"

So he stormed the gunwale, followed by his best men,

and succeeded in obtaining a foothold on Holmsten's dragon-ship. And now Leif was at his ease. Generously he dealt out blows and thrusts, and devoted himself energetically to the battle. He saw his men falling round him, and he himself had several wounds which he had not time to think about. He was not afraid of death, but meant to take Holmsten with him.

While Leif stood there, and dealt doughty blows around him in order to get at Holmsten, there came in sight a fleet of five ships by Hisargavl. The five ships were sailing swiftly, and the water foamed round their bows as they approached. At last Olmod the Old was about to overtake Leif. And he had bestirred himself, as it appeared. He gave himself no time to survey the situation, but drove his ships right in among the combatants. In his green cloak, with a golden helmet on his head, he stood in a dignified attitude by the mast and issued his orders.

“It looks as if you wanted a little help, Cousin Lief!” he shouted in the joy of battle. All other talking he left to his weapons.

Haersten saw quickly that his position was untenable, and gave orders for flight. But it was by no means so easy to get away in a moment. Holmsten's ship soon lay wedged in between those of Leif and Olmod the Old. Leif made use of the confusion which ensued among Holmsten's men at suddenly finding enemies on both sides, and made his way close up to Holmsten. When Holmsten saw him coming, he prepared to receive him in his cool and quiet way. But now Leif had become quite wild. When it seemed that he could not get for-

ward quickly enough, he flung his ax at Holmsten's face. Holmsten dropped his weapons, threw up his arms, reeled, and fell.

Leif's joy at seeing Holmsten fall was so great that he forgot to be on his guard. One of his men pushed a shield in front of him just in time. The shield was cloven by the blow of an ax, intended for Leif. But Leif was not to die that day. Now he was himself again, picked up his ax, and continued the attack. After Holmsten's fall the opposition was soon broken.

A couple of Olmod's ships had recovered the ship Atle's sons had won from Leif. Olmod secured for himself Holmsten's ship as a reward for his trouble, and in order to be able to provide offerings and gifts to Odin. The remainder of Atle's sons' ships escaped in disorder.

Olmod came across Leif where he was sitting and binding up his wounds.

"You are bleeding much, cousin, and can be glad that you still have blood to bleed."

"That I owe to you, Cousin Olmod. What lucky wind was that which blew you here, just when you were most needed?"

"Ask, rather, what freak was it of Odin's that he did not let me overtake you before. I came to Dalsfjord the day after you sailed, and have pursued you in vain all the summer."

Leif looked up hastily. A sudden fear shot through him.

"What did you want me for?"

"That you have seen."

Leif was quiet again. "Nothing more?" he asked.

“Don’t you think I had cause enough? Did you expect me to follow your tedious tracks, the whole summer, merely to bring you a greeting from Helga?”

Leif rose and drew a bracelet off his arm. It was for Olmod. He brought forth his most valuable things, resolved to give Olmod all the best he had. Objections were useless. When Leif gave, he gave what he had, and kept nothing back till he had no more.

“Finally, don’t think that by killing Holmsten and putting Haersten to flight you have finished with Atle’s sons,” Olmod said warningly. “I think, Cousin Leif, you had better come home and spend the winter with me.”

Leif thanked him warmly for the invitation. “It is such a short way home to the fjords that I don’t care about making a circuit. But what if you came home with me and remained with us for the winter, Cousin Olmod?”

But Olmod declined. A whole winter in one and the same place did not tempt him at all. “You brothers have enough friends round you, but be careful, cousin. I should be surprised if Haersten let the grass grow over the matter he has to settle with you. I am glad that this time I could be a little use to you, Leif. You have rewarded my help, as one might expect from you, spendthrift that you are! May good fortune follow you wherever you go.”

Olmod and Leif parted with great friendliness, and each sailed to his own home.

## VIII

It was really a surprise to Ingolf when he heard from his brother what had happened at Hisargavl. He had gradually come to fear a collision between Leif and Atle's sons. He did not trust Atle's sons any more since the feast of the previous winter. With a gloomy and slightly absent expression he heard Leif's account to the end. "I do not grieve for Holmsten," he said severely, when Leif finished. "I am glad that both brothers did not escape alive from the game. The Norns often strike accurately."

"It was by my ax that Holmsten fell," Leif answered curtly. "I will not share the honour of having slain him with any one, not even with the Norns!"

Ingolf smiled, but there was no laughter in his mind.

"The most important point, Leif, is that you returned home alive," he said cordially. "Thank yourself for it, but allow me to thank the gods and goddesses of fate."

Helga was very quiet when Leif told her about the battle. There rose in her soul a yet greater tenderness towards him. Every day, yes, every hour, with Leif became precious. A foreboding told her that Leif was scarcely destined to live long. Her happiness was like the flying birds.

Orn became quite enlivened by hearing of the fight at Hisargavl. Ingolf related it to him with much detail. As soon as he had finished, Orn demanded to have the whole told over again. It was entirely after his mind

— a proof that the race was not extinct. He put many questions and asked for incidents. Time after time, when the talk concerned Leif, he nodded approvingly. When his curiosity was at last satisfied, he sat silent and thoughtful, and still kept nodding to himself.

Rodmar sat in his darkness and heard the account through at one sitting. When Ingolf began again, he sighed deeply, rose, and, supported on his two sticks, tottered to his chamber and crept into bed. He could not understand that there was still so much disturbance in the world.

When Ingolf came out again from his father he was silent and thoughtful. He sought Leif, and found him in Helga's room. Ingolf sat down silently by his side and remained for a while without speaking. "Now Haasten remains behind with one arm," he said at last, in a subdued tone, more as though speaking to himself than to the others.

Helga looked hastily at him. "One must feel a great longing after a brother one loves," she said quietly.

Leif laughed sarcastically. "It will scarcely be a one-armed Haasten who comes out to take vengeance for Holmsten."

Ingolf looked at him. There was a troubled, but firm and quiet, look in his eye. "I should be surprised if Haasten took vengeance," Leif laughed scornfully. Ingolf rose quietly and said: "But it would be best to be on our guard against Haersten."

Ingolf took home to the chief house as many of his own and Leif's men as could be spared from the rest of



their property. Moreover, he collected his friends from the surrounding district. He always had many people round him in the winter. He set guards on all the roads to secure himself against an unexpected attack, and for the rest watched events quietly.

What had happened, had happened, and could not be altered. And whose fault was it? Neither his nor his sworn brother's, it seemed to him. He made offerings to Odin and Thor, and relied on them and on the good luck of the family.

Already, on the day after his arrival, Leif had to go to bed. For a considerable time he had to keep quiet. He suffered a good deal from his wounds. They were on various parts of his body, so that it was difficult for him to find rest.

Leif was not good at keeping quiet. He was tormented by an intolerable impatience. Time after time when his wounds were on the point of healing up they opened again, because of his want of care. The fever which accompanied the wounds had a wearing effect both on his flesh and his temper. He became even more bony and thin than he had been before. Long and wasted he lay there in bed, and vexed himself over the loss of the days, of which he was unjustly deprived.

Helga nursed him patiently, and always sat by him. That was the only thing which reconciled him with this kind of existence. He could not look away from her even for a moment. Leif discovered that there was a happiness and soothing effect in the touch of Helga's hands, which he had not hitherto known. All the time he had to have her hands busy about him. Leif was not

easy to manage. In vain did Helga beg and pray him to leave the bandages alone and not continually look at his wounds at the wrong time. At last she went in despair to Ingolf, and Ingolf found a means. On the same day that Helga had spoken to him, he said to Leif in his usual composed manner: "Your wounds are a long time healing, Cousin Leif. You will hardly be fit for fighting by the time Haersten attacks us." That was effectual. Ingolf knew his brother. From that day Leif lay rigidly still and did not touch the bandages. With a mighty effort he kept his mind in control and curbed his impatience. With a mysterious smile in her eyes, which Leif could not understand, Helga continued to nurse him. Leif could not make out why her eyes had suddenly become so bright. Here he lay, tortured both outwardly and inwardly. One would think that was nothing to be amused at. At last he asked her plainly, and in a rather morose tone, why she was so cheerful. Helga laughed, and promised to tell him as soon as his wounds were healed; for now that could hardly be long. Leif sighed. It seemed to him that already the time had been incomprehensively long.

At last the day came when Leif could go about on his legs again. But it was plain that he had quite got out of the habit of going with his head high and his legs down. His head was not so high aloft, and his legs tottered. He had to laugh at them. They were really silly legs — to speak plainly — miserable legs of dough. He went about laughing and waddling, and was obliged every minute to sit down and rest his legs. He had

never guessed that such a simple thing as walking could become so difficult.

But one day it was difficult no longer, and Leif rapidly forgot both his sickness and his weakness.

What was Haersten about? It seemed to Leif plain that he had a claim that Haersten should come now, and quickly. Now that he was in a condition to receive him in a suitable manner, he began to long for him deeply.

Leif went and exercised his arm-muscles by cutting logs for the fire. Ah! So he intended to split Haersten's head. But Haersten still kept them waiting. It was not according to Leif's mind to go and wait for an attack, which did not come. Had he had sufficient hope that Ingolf would go with him on a journey to Gaulum he would have proposed it. In his leisure time Leif imagined for himself an attack on Atle Jarl and his sons, picturing it down to the minutest details. He would himself strike down Haersten and Atle Jarl. But he would prefer to let Haersten escape with his life. It was a shame that such a splendid plan of attack should always be shipwrecked on Ingolf's obstinacy.

At last Haersten came. It was lucky that Ingolf had set guards upon the roads. Haersten did not come alone. He had planned his attack with care. He wished to wait till the brothers perhaps might not be so much on the alert. And he wished to come with a picked and numerous band, which it took time to assemble secretly, as the sworn brothers had friends also in those parts. Haersten had resolved that *one* life

was too little compensation for Holmsten. They should both die. Preferably he would strike them both to earth with his own hand.

Haersten had to do without Haasten's help in planning and carrying out his attack. On the other hand, Haasten did not put difficulties in his way. Haasten gave his mind to taking what vengeance he could, and to the extent he was able. "But my mind and my sense of justice tell me," he said, "not to go with you against the sworn brothers."

Haersten asked him whether his mind and his sense of justice did not also bid him to leave both his brothers unavenged in case he also should fall. Haasten answered him that time would show, but that it was conceivable.

"It might seem that you care more for Ingolf than for your own brothers," Haersten said coldly.

"I have a great regard for Ingolf," answered Haasten. "You brothers were not afraid to profit by your greater force when you attacked Leif."

So the conversation ended. When Haersten had quietly collected as many men as he thought would ensure a victory over the sworn brothers, even if he found them prepared, he started one night and took the way to Dalsfjord. He advanced by secret paths, and hid in the woods. He marched only by night, resting by day. But though he showed all possible caution, Ingolf's guards got news of his expedition. They were able to inform Ingolf in time that Haersten was approaching with a numerous following. In great haste the brothers collected a still larger number, and marched against

him to meet him before he expected it. The encounter took place one winter morning on the heath. Haersten and his men had spent the night on the outskirts of the wood. It was a still morning, with mild air, and the ground was heavy. The weather was admirably adapted for a battle, save that the snow became slippery when it had been trodden hard. Haersten and the sworn brothers prepared themselves, each on his own side, for a trial of strength, in all quietness and at their leisure. The result of the battle was of great importance to both parties, and they urged their men to be cautious and keep together.

Haersten seemed to seek Leif. And Leif was not the man to avoid a willing opponent. It was not long before they stood opposite each other, both fierce and vigilantly watching. But the fight between them was of short duration. They had only exchanged a few blows, and neither of them had yet been wounded, when Haersten slipped on the smooth ground. In the same instant Leif's ax descended on his neck. Haersten fell and remained lying. Red blood streamed profusely out of a deep wound in his neck. Smoking, it oozed into the cold white snow and formed holes with reddish edges. Thus fell Haersten.

When he had fallen, Ingolf had the trumpet blown for a truce, and invited Haersten's followers to go in peace. As no one wished for more fighting, Haersten's men marched, carrying his body, from their unsuccessful attempt, back to Gaulum.

Leif was quite jubilant. He never remembered having been so glad. Now he had avenged the attack at

Hisargavl, and settled all the rest of the account which he had with Atle's sons. There was a high degree of intoxication in his mind. He composed and sang with a strong voice a victor's song.

But Ingolf did not show any joy at the victory. He was silent and thoughtful. As soon as he had returned home with his men, he went to his father and told him of Haersten's fall. "It will not be in the neck of Atle's sons alone that Leif's ax has struck wounds," screamed Orn, with his heavy cutting voice, when he had heard Ingolf to the end. "Trust me! It is all over with our peace in Dalsfjord. Even though we have many friends, Atle Jarl and Haasten will in the long run prove too strong for us. Make peace with Haasten, my son, before it is too late. For old friendship's sake he will be satisfied with taking your property and driving you away from this district. I am too old, I know, to leave Dalsfjord myself. But don't you trouble about that. I am full of days, and will die soon. I had a foreboding that Leif would cause misfortune. But he is a plucky fellow. And what has happened has happened. Let me see him."

It had never been the case before that Orn had wished to see Leif. Once the sight of Leif had been to him a plague and an unceasing source of annoyance. Now he wished to see him. Leif was called, and willingly let himself be inspected by Orn's red, inflamed, swollen eyes. His spirits were so cheerful that he felt impelled to show himself friendly even towards Orn.

"Your appearance does not answer to your exploits," Orn exclaimed. "You are rather slight in

body to be a warrior. But, at any rate, I will give you Helga since she wants you. Take her and marry her, but do it quickly. For I will gladly drink your health at your marriage before I die. And I shall die soon."

Leif smiled and thanked him and was very friendly. It amused him to think that the permission was really rather superfluous. But that day he did not wish for any trouble. Haersten's death made him feel so prosperous and benevolent.

Ingolf had all day long been meditating. In the evening he asked Leif to speak with him in private.

"What do you think of sending messengers to Haasten and offering him an agreement on terms to be fixed by himself?" he asked quietly.

"That seems to me to be unnecessary weakness to submit the matter to Haasten's decision alone," answered Leif arrogantly. "If he wishes to pay us a call we shall know how to receive him."

"You forget, brother," said Ingolf calmly, but in a troubled voice, "that only in the utmost extremity can I use weapons against Haasten. You have deprived him of both his brothers. Even apart from the manner in which it happened it is a great loss for him. I, for my own part, will gladly purchase peace with Haasten at the price which he agrees upon."

The tone of Ingolf's voice moved Leif to the heart. "If you, for your part, wish to submit to Haasten's decision, I dare say I can consent," he said, in a compliant tone. "Hitherto I have not lost by letting you decide matters."

Ingolf chose the men whom he considered best suited for such a mission, and bade them go to Gaulum and offer Haasten terms. Haasten received Ingolf's envoys silently, and without returning their salutations. They had, however, been his companions on a summer Viking expedition, and several of them had been his friends. They did not know Haasten again. He had aged, and all signs of youthfulness had been obliterated from his face. Though his skin was still soft and smooth it was deeply furrowed. His look was cold and solitary. When he had heard the object of their errand, he said in an icy tone: "I will answer some day. Meanwhile I offer you shelter and food."

Haasten let them wait a whole week for an answer. He had a hard battle to fight first with his father and then with himself. Atle Jarl would at first hear nothing about an agreement. He demanded unconditionally, although coldly and without passion, the lives of the sworn brothers. He blamed Haasten for what had happened, because he had at the time refused to follow his advice and offer Ingolf and Leif blood-brotherhood. Haasten did not answer at length. But he did not give up till Atle Jarl agreed to lay the matter in his hand. When Haasten had thus become solely responsible, he had a hard battle to fight with himself. His family instinct demanded blood and not compensation. Even multiplied *weregeld* could not compensate him for the loss of his brothers. But could Leif's and Ingolf's lives do it either? The fact was that nothing could compensate for the loss of his brothers. But large fines might sustain the outward honour of the family. To



bear weapons against Ingolf, who had not committed any crime, was in itself unthinkable. Besides, Haasten remembered his vow to decide impartially if at any time a decision should be demanded from him.

When he had at last arrived at unity with himself he bade Ingolf's messengers be called, and spoke as follows: "The sworn brothers have desired me to judge between them and myself. My judgment is this. No compensation shall be asked for Holmsten because of his unjustified attack on Leif. But as compensation for Haersten, who went to take righteous vengeance for his brother, and by doing so lost his life at Leif's hand, I adjudge to myself all the sworn brothers' real property. Before three winters have passed they shall have left all their land and territory and fjords and hills. Otherwise they will be treated as outlaws wherever they may be found in the district."

The messengers went home and informed the brothers of Haasten's sentence. When Ingolf had heard it, he said quietly: "That was to be expected."

Leif, on the other hand, was furious. He never remembered to have heard of such an unreasonable sentence. Ingolf bade him take the matter quietly. "The sentence is certainly hard," he said, "but Haasten's loss is harder. I would not willingly change my circumstances with his."

All bitterness against Haasten vanished comparatively quickly from Leif's mind. The question, where they should now go and settle, absorbed him, all at once, so completely that he had no thoughts to spare for anything else. Leif was glad enough to go and settle

in a new country. One day he wished to go to England. Another day Ireland had suddenly assumed a great attraction for him. The Faroe Islands, Hjaltland, the Southern Islands — at least once a day in his thoughts he settled in all these. All at once the idea of Iceland occurred to him; strange to think that he had not come upon it at once.

Making a leap in the air, he went there in his own thoughts and settled in a strange land, and so sought Ingolf in hot haste. "We will go to Iceland!" he shouted in his delight, and was already absorbed, body and soul, in his idea. "There we shall have a whole country to ourselves."

"Is it not somewhat lonely?" asked Ingolf, smiling.

Leif thought over that, and conceded that in the long run it might be rather lonely. "But you will see many will follow after us. Many in Norway are discontented with Harald, who will not tolerate any will by the side of his own. The best people will follow us thither — people who can no more find complete freedom in this country. Harald is already seeking to kill many of the best men. There his arm cannot reach them. Sooner or later the land will be colonized; it is said to be fertile. Let us be the first. Ingolf, do you hear, let us be the first."

There was something in Leif's plan which attracted Ingolf. If he had to depart and find himself a new dwelling, why not seek it in a new country? Ingolf the Imperturbable felt his heart beat.

Leif was all fire and flame, and consequently not to be resisted. At last Ingolf yielded. "We can journey

there in the summer and survey the country," he said.

When Leif had got Ingolf so far, he became wild with joy and dangerous to approach. Ingolf had to wrestle with him; there was no getting out of it. A little after they were both lying in the soft snow. When the wrestle was thus over, they began to pile snow on each other, till they had to stop for laughing. The boy was uppermost in each of them. They were happy, and forgot to be troubled and anxious at the loss of their property. Blood and life surged through them. They could still fight as in the old days.

## IX

Ingolf kept deeply secreted in his heart the image of a young girl. Her name was Hallveig, and hers was the only woman's look which had ever stirred his soul. Her grey eyes lived so vividly in his memory, he could see them before him when he wished. The thought of them made his usually quiet heart quiver. Her name was Hallveig, and her image was painfully and distinctly impressed on his mind.

He had seen her for the first time in the preceding winter when, on one of his trading journeys, he had spent the night at the house of her father, Frode. And that first time had hitherto been the only one.

He had made the acquaintance of her father, Frode, and her brother, Lopt, before, at various sacrificial feasts. Lopt and himself had much in common. Lopt was a quiet and rather reserved man. His whole ap-

pearance bore the stamp of the well-to-do yeoman farmer's firmness and self-possession. Lopt and Ingolf had always felt attracted by each other. They were both strong, high-born men without deceit or flaw in their minds. A mutual consciousness of their inner affinity had from the beginning brought them near each other.

Thus Ingolf came to the house one winter evening and saw Lopt's sister. Her name was Hallveig, and she was only eighteen. She was very serious. Ingolf never saw her smile like other young women. Already her inner seriousness roused great disquiet in his mind. Hallveig did not go about lavishing her smiles. Her look was watchful and critical. She looked at people, and had a scale to weigh them by. One became clear about one's value under her look. And her look did not flinch nor change like that of other women when one encountered it. It met one like a man's. It was in some degree a boy's look, thought Ingolf. He sat there that evening and could take neither his eyes nor his thoughts from Hallveig. Lopt and Frode often had to repeat their questions to him. The whole of Ingolf's listening faculty was turned inward and not outward. He sat by her side and forgot both them and himself. All that he knew was that now and then he cast a furtive glance at Hallveig. And yet he sat the whole time and looked at her. It was the first time that Ingolf had been in love, and it was of benefit to him. The next day was fixed for his departure, but he did not go. He was travelling with important objects, and it would be very extraordinary if he delayed his

journey without special reason. But he remained all the same, and forgot to give himself or others a reason for it. He simply remained because it was impossible for him to go that day.

He had a long talk with Hallveig, sitting by her side in the morning. A little after (so it seemed) he was surprised to find it already evening. How the day had gone was a puzzle to him. He was lost.

Ingolf did not find it at all surprising that he found such a good opportunity to talk with Hallveig undisturbed. He had neither time to notice nor to reflect upon the fact that Lopt and Frode had left them alone the whole day. He had no idea that any one could look at him and observe from his behaviour what impression Hallveig had made upon him.

The whole of that day, which he afterwards did not know what had become of, he sat and talked with Hallveig. Not once did she smile at him. But there was in her look a charm which surpassed every smile. There was a warmth in her look and a secret confidence which put him at his ease. Her nearness filled him with a peculiar quivering consciousness of security. He felt that there was already a deep intimacy between him and this woman whom he did not know and yet knew.

The next day Ingolf went on his journey. When he gave Hallveig his hand at parting their eyes met. The look of both was firm and serious. Suddenly Hallveig smiled. Her eyes became bright with a beaming smile. All at once Ingolf perceived that there was something he had forgotten or neglected — something which could

not be omitted. He stood there with her hand in his, uneasy and irresolute, quite otherwise than he was accustomed.

But he now already held her hand at departure and must go. Confused and dissatisfied with himself, and yet at the same time filled with a tremulous happiness, he went away. Ingolf did not forget Hallveig's solitary smile. He reflected much whether she had ever given any other man her smile, in the same way as she had to him. He did not believe it. But if she had, the man must die.

How Ingolf passed the year, before he returned to Hallveig, he did not know. It was quite unconsciously that he gave the memory of her time to grow and blossom in his soul. All that he knew about it was that every time he had resolved with himself that now he would go to Frode's house and visit her, his mind was filled with anxiety and unrest. He found no solid reason for waiting. His longing urged him almost irresistibly to make the journey. He was also quite certain that he ran a risk by postponing it. All the same he waited.

At a feast at Gaulum the previous autumn he had met Lopt. During the three days of the feast they had been inseparable. Quite involuntarily they had kept together. Once, when the talk had turned on Lopt's and Frode's affairs, Lopt said, smiling: "We cannot get my sister, Hallveig, married. She rejects all suitors." As Lopt spoke, Ingolf's heart began to beat violently and joyfully. The day seemed to expand around him and become beautiful. The colours

of the heavens and earth crowded at once upon his sight. The air itself became fresh and reviving. He found no answer to make to Lopt's remark, and therefore pretended not to have heard him. Soon afterwards he began to talk of something else. But he did not succeed in deceiving Lopt, who, when alone, smiled to himself. Soon after Ingolf's meeting with Lopt, Leif returned from his Viking expedition. Ingolf had enough to do, and was for a time cut off from all possibility of traveling.

But when the agreement with Haasten was settled, and the journey to Iceland to look for a residence determined on, it became at once as impossible for Ingolf to postpone the decisive interview with Hallveig as it had been for him before to resolve on a visit. Ingolf, according to his custom, first spoke with his father on the subject. Orn was highly pleased, and declared himself in every way satisfied with his choice. "Frode," he said, "is rich and well-born. It is time that you settled in life. Leif and you can celebrate your marriage in the autumn. You should not put off the journey for a day. You can go, my son."

Ingolf went to Leif and asked for his companionship on a journey without disclosing further the object or the direction of it. Leif needed no pressing. He was always ready for a journey, he did not care where. If Ingolf did not reveal to him his object and the place whither he was bound, it was because he had good reasons for concealing it.

The brothers left home with a select but not very numerous retinue. Leif received a strong impression

that this mysterious journey was of great importance. Could it possibly be a wooing expedition? Leif studied Ingolf closely, and came to the conclusion that it was. It amused him to guess whom Ingolf had pitched upon. He could not make out. In that respect he knew nothing of Ingolf. Had Ingolf really fallen in love dumbly and silently? Leif could not picture Ingolf to himself as an enamoured suitor. In secret he was immensely amused at his brother's seriousness and taciturnity. But he showed great caution in his behaviour towards him. He observed that a great deal was at stake for Ingolf. He surmised that his quiet demeanour was not so genuine as it usually was.

When one evening they reached Frode's house, Leif did not guess that they had already arrived at their journey's end. But as soon as he saw Hallveig, he knew; and he was immediately filled with a warm and brotherly affection for her.

When Hallveig heard that Ingolf had come, she at once knew the reason. She put on her finest dress, and displayed her most valuable ornaments. Any one might think what they would; for her it was a festal day.

In this attire she went to meet Ingolf. Quietly and seriously she returned his greeting. Her whole manner told Ingolf that he was expected.

One evening she led Ingolf to her room. The next day Ingolf spoke with Lopt and Frode, and asked Hallveig in marriage. Frode gave him his daughter gladly. Lopt said that there was no one he would prefer as a brother-in-law. They quickly settled all the conditions.



The sworn brothers' loss of their property was not mentioned at the time. Hallveig was summoned and questioned. Willingly and with deep earnestness she gave her mind to the matter. When, later on, she was alone with Ingolf, she wept and kissed him fervently. Ingolf was a constant surprise to her. Afterwards she smiled at him through her tears. There was a peculiar power and a complete abandonment in all her caresses. Ingolf felt beyond the shadow of a doubt that she was completely his, and for the whole of life. And her demeanour showed just as certainly that she was happy.

Frode and Lopt celebrated the betrothal by a great feast. Ingolf and Leif remained a whole week in the house. When they left, the wedding was fixed for about three weeks later. In accordance with Ingolf's wish it was to take place in Orn's house, since his father felt too old to travel.

Ingolf and Hallveig were agreed on having the shortest possible interval before their marriage. They did not wish to wait a day longer than necessary, now that they at last had each other. They found it almost impossible to separate, though it was only for three weeks. They could not comprehend how they had hitherto been able to live without each other. Ingolf felt now that the two years which had passed since he saw Hallveig for the first time were as though lost for him. Yes, his whole youth seemed as though lost for him since he had not met Hallveig before.

Never had Ingolf before reflected how short life really was. He had not measured it with love's measuring-rod.

## X

Orn was peculiarly restless during the first days after Ingolf's departure. He became gradually alarmed, though he had considered it the wisest course to conceal his alarm from his son, lest Frode should perhaps make difficulties, now that the agreement with Haasten had deprived Ingolf of all his real property. It was quite clear to Orn that it was on this point the prestige of his family would be tested. If Frode did not refuse to give his daughter in marriage to a man who had been judicially deprived of all his landed property, it was because the man was Ingolf, Orn's son.

As the days passed, and it became evident that the brothers, at any rate, were not returning at once, Orn became quieter, and with every succeeding day his calm increased. The continued absence of the brothers could be only due to their having succeeded in their object.

Orn and Rodmar celebrated this by a justifiable drinking bout. Before the fumes of their intoxication had quite passed off, Ingolf and Leif returned home, having, as was apparent, quite succeeded in their object. Orn and Rodmar went on drinking to celebrate the good news. Then Orn went to bed and slept for a night and half the following day. When he had had his sleep out, he began to arrange everything for the double marriage which was imminent. He also wished to have a hand in the preparations for the feast. He let all and each know that since the gods had been so kind as to allow

him to celebrate both his children's weddings, and that at the same time, there should be a feast which should be known far and wide and be long remembered. He had the temple, together with every house and every cottage on the estate, swept from roof to floor, and all the woodwork cleaned. He himself selected the cattle and the swine which should be fattened for the feast. He tasted the liquors brewed, measured out the meal and the corn, and was everywhere.

Rodmar was homeless in all this disquiet. He tried his old device of going to bed and keeping himself to himself in his darkness. He counted the days and was morose. About three weeks were to be occupied with preparations for the wedding, and then a week with the festivities themselves. Rodmar drained his drinking-horn deep. The future looked very empty to him.

Orn sent Leif and Ingolf out to invite people to the feast. They spent many days in travelling from house to house. Orn questioned them every evening as to where they had been, and made plans for the next day. He was indefatigable. A peculiar excitement, which he did not remember to have felt before a festival since his early youth, deprived him of his appetite for food, and partly also of his tendency to drink. He was about from early morning to late in the evening. All the same, it was difficult for him to sleep at night.

Helga sat in her room and sewed at her bridal dress. Every hour of leisure which Leif found he spent there with her. He was considerate towards Helga, and avoided disturbing her with talk or caresses. He could stand for hours together and watch her, as she sat and

sewed, eager and absorbed, with busy hands and hot cheeks. Leif was very happy at that time. But as soon as he had not Helga before his eyes, he could not realize that in a few days they should be man and wife, and had to go in again and watch her sewing the bridal dress.

Orn had the banqueting hall draped with costly tapestry, and shields hung up.

At last the day dawned. And the same day spring made its entry with southern winds and genial temperature. Already from the early morning guests began to assemble at the house. Somewhat before noon came Frode with his daughter and son and a splendid retinue. Then the wedding could begin. With eight days' unbroken festivities the marriage bonds between Ingolf and Hallveig, Helga and Leif, were sealed.

Frode showed great gladness at the connection, and celebrated his daughter's marriage with all the customary sports and pageants. Orn only celebrated his son's with sacrificial feasts, with, as became a host, the usual meals and drinking bouts. The meals were many and luxurious, and the drinking bouts were long. Quantities of mead and wine were drunk, and many swine and oxen eaten, besides game and other food common at festivals.

Once more Orn was able to sit in stately fashion in the high-seat and preside over a feast. During the days of this festival Frode shared the high-seat with him. They knew each other well by the wounds received in their youth and manhood. Many cheerful memories were

revived, and they shared in great friendliness their drink and the high-seat.

Orn had become an old man. Age had bent his back, made his face puffy, and dulled his hearing. Nevertheless, he wore an air of dignity on such an occasion. The chieftain was uppermost in him, and his natural courage blazed up in one last victorious flame. Ingolf had rather feared that his father would not be equal to preserving his dignified bearing through such a trying festival, but his fear proved groundless. Orn rallied all his powers and held out. He took part in every meal. He emptied his drinking-horn at every health. He sat as host in the high-seat, and still on the last day of the feast his spirits were unequalled, his thinking power unaffected. He held out till the last guest had left the place. Then the spring had already done its work. The snow had gone. Everywhere one caught glimpses of the first signs of summer's approaching splendour.

The next day Orn lay dead in his bed. His right hand clasped the knife with which he had just succeeded in cutting the sign of the Hammer on his breast. He had secured his seat in Valhalla.

Thus died Orn. His death did not especially surprise Ingolf or any one else. Age and debility had during the last years handled him roughly. In spite of all, he had been a chieftain to the end.

## XI

It was very still in the house after Orn's death. His harsh, irascible voice was suddenly lost in a great silence. And this silence was doubly impressive just after the concluded festivities. Ingolf at once set his people to brew drink, slaughter animals, and prepare for the funeral feast. Orn should begin his last journey with all suitable honour. But this time the work was done without the noise which usually attended preparations of that kind. In Ingolf's soul there remained a special sense of bereavement. He had always shown his father reverence; now he realized that he had also been very fond of him. Ingolf selected with care a spot down by the fjord where a funeral barrow would look well in the landscape. He caused a little natural hollow to be filled with potter's clay; then had one of his smaller dragon-ships rolled on logs thither and fixed on the bed of clay with its bow turned towards the south. Orn's journey should be towards the south and the sun. When the ship was settled in its place and shored up, Ingolf traced a wide circle round it. Orn perhaps was the last of the race who should rest in the soil of his fatherland, therefore his funeral barrow should be a notable landmark.

Ingolf collected a large number of workmen from his own and Leif's estate, and set them to work at erecting the barrow. It was to be done quickly. For nothing is quite sure for a dead man till he rests in earth under the sign of the Hammer.

Ingolf sent messengers round to invite all those in the district and many distant friends and relatives to the funeral feast at a few days' notice. He and Leif superintended the work at the barrow, and it went forward rapidly.

The voracious earth was not to be allowed to devour Orn's ship, therefore stones were fixed everywhere between the earth and the woodwork. Outside it were piled gravel, earth, and turf.

Amidships, round the mast, which was hoisted as though for sailing and so that the roof of the barrow might form an arch over it, was the burial chamber, as broad as the ship and two fathoms in length, timbered with thick oak-beams. It was to resist the pressure both of the stones and the earth: there should Orn lie, warm and comfortable, ready for his journey. All was arranged with a view to a journey by land and by water.

In the stern of the ship were stored up all possible articles which could be of use in cooking. There were iron cauldrons of various sizes, with the iron claws belonging to them and swivels for hanging them up on; a large barrel for the supply of the ship's drinking water, together with other larger and small oaken barrels with hoops of tough kinds of wood; different vessels with and without lids, together with wooden dishes, some in the shape of fishes; pails with handles of iron and bands of bronze or wood; scoops of iron and of wood; knives; a stone hand-mill and a stick to turn it with; a frying-pan; a three-legged kitchen-stool; axes; and many other articles. Some of the wooden

ones were splendidly carved, and on others many-coloured designs were painted. In the stern was also the ship's anchor. The rudder was, of course, fixed in its place.

Ingolf further furnished the ship with all that was necessary: cordage, sails, oars, tent-cloths and poles, hooks, oar-forks, and other articles for a voyage. A landing-plank was not forgotten.

In the forepart of the ship he placed a carved and fully equipped sledge, with the harness and bearskin bags belonging to it. Thither he had also brought a painted and carved carriage, with a driving-seat and harness. Orn's saddle was brought on board, together with bridle and reins, and all things needed for a horse. Orn should never be in difficulties regarding his land-journey.

Ingolf had many things brought into the burial chamber. He filled several boxes with useful articles belonging to a chieftain's equipment and placed them in it. A bed and bedding were brought in, and he gave his father costly coverlets for the journey. He did not forget to supply a comb, so that his father might arrange his hair and beard when he presented himself before the Ases. He gave him also rings, ornaments, and other valuables, so that all should at once know whom they had before them. Moreover, he provided him with thunder-stones, small Thor-hammers, and other sacred articles for his protection on the journey, together with a money-box to defray the possible expenses. Orn should certainly not want coin. Ingolf also had several barrels of wine and meat brought to the burial chamber,



together with costly drinking-horns to drink from and to proffer. An ox and a swine and many other animals had already been selected for slaughter. Orn should suffer neither hunger nor thirst on his long journey.

When all these things had been arranged, and the barrow was already partially erected so that there was only a wide passage to the burial chamber, and all that remained was to pile stones and earth over the ship, the day came which was fixed for the funeral feast and committal to the barrow.

A swarm of people had collected to do the last honours to Orn. Ingolf himself conducted the ceremonies, both at the temple and at the barrow. He had inherited the office of priest of the district from his father, and now himself discharged the priestly functions. With the sign of the Hammer he consecrated his father for the last journey.

Stretched on a bier, clad in his splendid garments, Orn left his house for the last time. A golden-winged helmet crowned his white hair. A sword gleamed by his side. A shield painted in many colours covered his breast. Equipped for a chieftain's journey, Orn was carried to his burial chamber.

The serf who was selected and already consecrated to follow him, for it was not fitting that Orn should journey quite alone, stood ready, and only waited for the knife, with which he was to stab himself, to be given him.

Then came Rodmar, who in these busy and restless days had been forgotten by all, tottering on two sticks hither from the house, led by two of his men and followed

by another man carrying a chair. He was not dressed as a chieftain. Looking untidy, as he had just got out of bed, in clothes which he had not changed for a long time, and with his grey locks floating freely in the wind, came Rodmar, staring stiffly and blankly with his blind eyes.

Rodmar had had a bad time in his darkness and loneliness since Orn's death. He had hoped that death would come and fetch him before the barrow over Orn had been finished. He would so gladly share the barrow with him, and follow him on his journey.

It was impossible to remain behind now that his only friend had departed. The solitude became intense and oppressive around him, and the pain of his darkness was doubled. At last he took the resolve to follow his elder kinsman in death, as he had always followed him in life.

Rodmar crawled over the gunwale on his crooked legs and groped his way forward to the opening of the burial chamber. Then he turned and spoke to the air. "Is there wine on board?" he asked in an impatient and peremptory tone.

Leif sprang on board and led his father from barrel to barrel so that he could feel them with his own hands. Rodmar shook the barrels to see whether they were full, and sniffed them distrustfully. He chose one of them, and demanded to have one hoop knocked off. This was done. Afterwards he asked that the tool for opening it should remain with him and be close to his hand. He was also allowed to retain the tool.

His seat was fixed in its place, and Rodmar sat down with a long sigh of relief, as it were. On one side of him

he had an open barrel of red wine, on the other a horn filled to the brim, standing on a little table, which had been quickly brought to the place.

Rodmar borrowed Leif's sword, and, baring his breast with fumbling fingers, cut on it with his own hand the sign of the Hammer. Then he said farewell to Ingolf and the others standing round, and in a slightly morose and curt tone gave Leif his last blessing. Then the opening to the burial chamber was closed up. Rodmar sat, as long as they could see him, motionless on his chair. He had secured Orn's society for ever. He was prepared for anything that might come. A man should be able both to live and die with a light heart. He had drink for the journey, and there is also wine in Valhalla.

Ingolf killed with his own hand an ox that was laid on an oak-plank by the side of the kitchen utensils. Its mouth was held open with a wooden gag and turned towards the south. He also slew with his own hand four horses, two dogs, and a swine. The swine was laid by the side of the box; the other animals were taken to the fore-part of the ship. The serf who was to have accompanied Orn was now spared, as Orn had better company.

Stones were heaped over the ship and all its contents, and then the barrow was hastily filled up. This closed the funeral ceremonies. Orn and Rodmar had departed to Odin.

## XII

It soon became evident to Ingolf that on that spring day he had not buried Orn only. He had also interred

with his father his home-feeling, his peace and confidence in this region of his childhood and youth. Already, when on the first morning after the burial he stepped out of the house and saw his father's mighty barrow lift its dome in the landscape, it struck him all at once that the district had assumed an alien aspect. The confidence in the contours and colours, which has its root in the child's free look and strong, unconscious sense of belonging to the spot where he has grown up, was gone. The landscape had suddenly lost its light in his eyes. He felt thrust out and lonely. It was not here that he should live his life.

Hitherto it had not been really clear to him what a profound change his life would undergo because of Haasten's sentence. The fact that he was now homeless had, as it were, not yet broken on him in its full extent. Now he saw suddenly what Haasten's sentence really implied — a complete alteration of his whole life. First, years perhaps must be spent in search and insecurity. And then a battle for life and death with inner and outer powers, in order to gain home-feeling and home-rights in a foreign land.

Ingolf felt from his own experience that the race which has not its own soil to grow in is doomed to misfortune and ruin. The possession of land stamps the race. The man who could be sentenced to lose his possessions was exiled from the earth — this was what Ingolf felt now. Such a man must gain earth's favour anew by his honest will to live in peace on earth's fruits.

Ingolf's hitherto unconscious instinct of opposition to force of all kinds was now suddenly revealed to him.

That which had now happened to him was not undeserved, even if the blame for the outer cause of the misfortune could not be imputed either to him or to Leif.

He had continued to ravage foreign lands and to pillage people with whom he had not the least quarrel. From a kind of secret cowardice he had suppressed the unwillingness he had felt in doing so, as unworthy of a man and a Viking. But now he saw that law and right extend beyond the borders of one's own country. They are valid wherever there is land and sea. The man who aims at living by force and pillage, not only sins against the law which he carries within him, but also against the earth — the sacred earth, which by the grace of the gods is so luxuriant and fruitful that every year it is ready to fill the peaceful barns. As long as the Ases had still reigned undisputed there was peace in their dwellings. The Ases had been driven to conflict and war by the dark powers who were responsible for all disturbance. Thus all disturbance and violence came from the evil power. Ingolf vowed to himself that from that day he would never lift a weapon against any man except to protect his own and his family's life and property. That resolve somewhat soothed the disquiet and restlessness which had seized him when he became conscious of his homelessness, and suddenly felt himself exiled from the kindness of the earth. The bright Ases would still grant his family a home and prosperity when they saw his honest purpose and clean struggle. The earth would yet take him into favour again when he no longer defiled it with blood and violence, would fulfill his most sacred, yes, his only wish,

that his family-tree might be leafy and strong-stemmed. Since fate had granted him Hallveig as a wife, it could scarcely intend to exclude him from the earth.

Ingolff thought much of the far and foreign land away in the west which he was to travel to. Was it there that his family's cradle for the future should be? Was it there that the pillars of his high-seat should consecrate the earth for him?

He dared not believe it yet. Neither did he dare to go to the gods and ask them. He himself had to seek his future home. He must win again what had been lost here by his own fault. He wished to commit himself to the power of the sky and sea without first seeking instruction from the gods. He would match his own strength and will against storm and sea as a pledge and sign. He would not beg; he would gain by fighting the favour of fate and of the gods.

Now that his father was dead, he was himself the eldest and chief of the family. The responsibility for the honour of the dead, and the honour and prosperity of the unborn, rested principally on him. For now he alone wore the family bracelet, and now the high-seat was also his.

BOOK III





## I

**I**NGOLF and Leif equipped themselves in great haste for their journey to seek the land which Raven-Floke had last visited, and which he had given the name of Iceland. They wished to be there as early in the year as possible, in order to be the better able to explore the distant and unknown island. Therefore there was no time to be lost. The first thing they did was to acquire a trading vessel, a strong sea-ship, in exchange for two of their smallest ships, which, in all probability, they would not want to use again. A trading vessel was just what they now needed. In the conflict they were proceeding to, there was no use for small, light battleships. Their new vessel was certainly neither little nor light. It was a regular ox to look at. High and broad, clumsy and solid, it lay, and the movements of the water only made it rock sluggishly. By the side of the long, slim, low-decked dragon-ships, it was seen to great disadvantage. Leif laughed at it, called it his rock and his old woman's boat, said that it had a stomach like an old cow, and expressed his fixed opinion that it certainly cherished secret designs of going to the bottom at the first opportunity. But Leif did it great injustice. The vessel was good enough for its

purpose, even if it was a little slow in turning and no beauty to look at.

It had a half-deck at prow and stern and a small side-deck along the gunwales. The rest of it was one large hold, in the midst of which towered a great, solid, strongly supported mast. It was exclusively built for the purpose of long trade-journeys, and therefore quite excellently suited for such an expedition in which the chief object was to convey as much as possible. There were but a few banks of oars fore and aft; one might as well try to row a rock over the sea. It was not adapted to be propelled by slender oars. The oars were only there to turn it and to facilitate going on shore. It was to sail, not to be rowed. Therefore it was entirely dependent on wind and weather. But, on the other hand, it took the wind and weather with a composure and immovability which came near to justifying its nickname of a "rock." It only had one enemy — lack of wind.

It certainly did not dance on the billows like a dragon-ship. It was too contemptuous of the unstable element around it, whose humours it only yielded to when compelled, and then as little as possible. It entered into no brotherly alliance with the wind. *That* it took into its service and allowed to further its object.

Such was the new ship, inspiring confidence in a high degree and independent, both in form and behaviour — free from all kinds of levity. Storm and sea were its — certainly often somewhat wayward — servants, but not its masters.

Hallveig took an eager part in the loading of the vessel and in all preparations for the journey, and showed Ingolf in numberless little ways that she had no intention of remaining at home. When Ingolf was aware of it, it seemed to him that he had all along known that Hallveig was like that. And yet it gave his happiness an increased fullness and weight. Without inquiries of any kind, with a silent agreement, as though it were a matter of course, Hallveig prepared to follow him always and everywhere, to belong to him and to be near him.

For Helga, who already went about with a hidden foreboding of coming separation in her mind, the spring suddenly became really spring when she saw Hallveig's preparations. If Hallveig could travel with them, so could she. Of herself, Helga would never have hit upon so bold an idea, though not from want of courage. Her courage and readiness to sacrifice herself where Leif was concerned were boundless. Her backwardness was from an inherited fear of causing trouble and being inconvenient, and a deep anxiety not to displease Leif in any thing great or small.

Helga wept for gladness when it was decided that she should also go with them. She did not often weep in the sight of others. Her weeping made Leif quiet and thoughtful. He guessed that he often, for the most part through thoughtlessness, caused Helga grief which she did not show. For some time his tenderness towards her knew no bounds, and Helga was happier than she had been for a long time.

Hallveig and Helga had been at first somewhat shy of

each other. Helga was in her own way independent enough. She certainly had a will, and knew in every case what she wanted. But Hallveig's whole resolute way of behaving and acting alarmed her a little. It took her some time to understand that Hallveig was far from being inconsiderate and selfish, that, on the contrary, she had a recklessness and warmth in her devotion which was apparent in each of her words and deeds in such a decisive way that to superficial observation it might look like want of consideration and self-will. Yes, in her devotion Hallveig was certainly reckless. Every one could easily see that she loved Ingolf and belonged to him with body and soul. The quiet and apparently cold Hallveig displayed a peculiar latent warmth and energy in all that she undertook. She did not lavish smiles and caresses; that was not her nature. No one had heard her speak tenderly or lovingly to Ingolf. But out of all her actions shone love and tender solicitude. An invisible fire burned around the apparently cold-natured woman.

When Helga first became convinced that she had at the beginning mistaken her sister-in-law and done her injustice in her heart, a specially warm devotion for Hallveig broke forth in her soul. And from the moment that Hallveig saw that the reserve Helga had hitherto displayed towards her had been a veil she had covered herself with in the presence of a stranger, she embraced her also with the latent warmth of her nature.

Hallveig showed Helga that outside the house also a woman may be a benefit and do good service. Even when it was a question of loading a ship for a long

journey there were many things a woman could help and participate in. Hallveig, who was never at ease when Ingolf was occupied with the ship, from this time always took Helga with her when she went down to it. She had an amusing way of walking, Helga thought. She took long, resolute, manly strides, and her legs were obviously legs under her skirts. Helga found it difficult to follow her when she was in a hurry, as she almost always unconsciously was.

Hallveig examined even the smallest details that concerned the loading of the ship, with her husband and Leif, and did so in a matter-of-course tone which aroused Helga's astonishment and admiration. In everything she said, Hallveig showed her practical sense. She did not hesitate either to give help where it was needed. Her help and advice were gladly welcomed. Her advice was advice and not child's prattle. It was nearly always followed.

Hallveig had a peculiar rapid way of surveying matters. This was the best place for this, and for that. She demanded that everything which might be needed on the voyage should be as easily accessible as possible. Ingolf and Leif had never given a thought to that. They only thought of packing things so that they fitted in, took the least possible room, and were so distributed according to weight and size that the ship might lie on the water as level as possible. Now Hallveig showed them that with a little reflection all these objects might be excellently combined.

Hallveig's and Helga's presence and hearty participation in the work — for Helga also quickly began to

use both eyes and hands — put Ingolf and Leif in high spirits, which helped them over many difficulties and trifling annoyances.

The vessel was loaded amid much merriment. Corn in chests, dried fish in great bundles, butter in small barrels, and boxes of dried flesh and salt meat, beer and wine in barrels — a whole year's provision of food and drink — were brought on board and packed carefully in the great hold. But the vessel's stomach had to find space for much more. Small compartments had to be made for the animals which were to be taken with them. A cow and a pair of goats; they could not be entirely without milk. There was also an ox to be slaughtered, and a bull-calf to be company for the cow through the winter and grow large and fat and ready to be slaughtered in the spring. A sow with small pigs was also useful to have with them, together with some sheep, and a couple of horses were simply indispensable.

And, at any rate, there was room for a hut for Hallveig and Helga. The hut was Hallveig's idea. She did not wish only to be with them; she wished to *live* on board and to be comfortable. Leif jumped like a boy with delight when Hallveig put forward her proposal about the hut. From that day not even the smallest thing seemed to him quite right till Hallveig had expressed her satisfaction with it. He would rather have Hallveig's help in counsel and action than that of most men, he declared decisively. And he was absolutely resolved to teach her to swing an ax and to hurl a spear. Hallveig did not often laugh, but she had to laugh sometimes at Leif. There was the same complete-

ness and power in Hallveig's laughter as in all the rest of her character and behaviour. When Hallveig laughed, there was something to laugh at. She could never be imagined laughing at any one or anything she did not like.

So these spring days passed. Liveliness and activity reigned everywhere. This journey to a foreign land, which at the beginning seemed so difficult to carry into effect, so improbable and unrealizable, became through all these preparations imminent and a matter of course for all those who took part in it. Here Ingolf now stood in the smithy and forged scythes to cut grass in a land which he had never seen and really only heard a tale about. Who was Naddod the Viking? Who was Gardar Svavarsson? Who was Raven-Floke? Or Thorolf Smor? Could one be sure they had not imagined that land over there? Or that others had imagined *them* and the whole affair? One might be foolish to believe it, but he was going to get a sight of it. And while Ingolf forged scythes to cut grass in that legendary land of the west, and made spades to dig in its soil, that fact became firmly fixed in his mind. In spite of all doubt, the land lay and actually existed over there in the sea. And, in fact, it became more than real to him. It lay there and spoke secretly to his soul; it waited for him almost like a friend. And thus it seemed at last to have a claim on him, which he could not disregard. For the land lay there and expected to be taken in possession, as is the right of every land. Such and similar thoughts filled Ingolf. And yet he did not guess that while he stood there in

his smithy and forged scythes and prepared implements with which to till the new land's soil, the land took *him* in possession by help of the secret power a land possesses — never again to let him go.

Ingolf and Leif had to prepare themselves to build winter dwellings and to store hay for their animals, therefore they took implements with them, without considering what power the earth and implements together have over a man's soul. They did not guess that only homeless men wander their free ways, which are no ways, or rather that secret earth-powers guide all other steps.

Ingolf and Leif provided themselves with fishing-gear and nets for catching birds. They also took a pair of boats.

When the boat was loaded and everything else was in order for the journey, Ingolf concluded his preparations with a great sacrificial feast, at which he made abundant offerings to the gods, in order that they should grant him and his fellow-travellers good fortune and happiness on the voyage. Nevertheless, the days went by without the commencement of the hoped-for sailing weather.

These days of waiting were hard for Leif to bear. He became morose. Any kind of waiting was the worst thing Leif knew. It made his hasty and adventurous spirit full of discontent. He cursed the vessel, called it a wretched old woman's bath, and invented even worse names for it.

Ingolf took the matter quietly. Certainly he had already made his offerings to the gods, and copiously. But it was a special voyage they were to make — the



gods were to protect them, and on wide and strange ways. He therefore brought fresh offerings, and also secretly gave Odin and Njord private gifts, besides vowing yet greater ones if they would prosper his journey there and back and on the way. This expedient helped. There came a day with splendid sailing weather — a sunshiny day full of light and warm wind. Before midday all was ready — the animals brought on board, the crew in their places (Ingolf and Leif took only the smallest possible crew with them), and the vessel cleared for sailing. Under a heavily bellying sail it glided out between the skerries. Hallveig and Helga stood on the poop by their husbands and watched the shores glide past on either side. Hallveig was quiet in mind, and felt only glad at the fine day and the journey. Sea and land were all the same to her, if only she had Ingolf. Here they were sailing out to find a new land, to seek a new home. She was ready with all her soul to remain fixed in the spot on the earth which Ingolf might choose for them, no matter where it might be.

But with Helga it was otherwise. She was calm and quiet enough, but her calm was, as so often on other occasions, only outward. The strong scent of the pines from the spruce- and fir-clad islands they were sailing by, roused a profound longing in her soul. This was the place where she was at home. There in the house down there by the shore, which seen from the fjord here looked so strange. There seemed to be a sob in Helga's soul. She, the faithful, had only one home. She did not at all wish to turn or to remain behind, for she

stood here by Leif's side. But she felt as though her heart were being split asunder and her soul divided. For this place which she now left, to return to it next spring only for a time, had shared with her happiness and solitude. There was hardly a stone in the house which she had not patted with her hand and made her confidant in joy or sorrow. She was bound to the house and the surroundings of her childhood with ties which could not be loosed or cut asunder. She knew with certainty that she would always feel strange and homeless outside Dalsfjord. She reproached herself for this feeling — for she had Leif — but she could not overcome it. All she could do was to vow to herself never to betray it. Thus Helga took a secret with the scent of the pine trees from the islands.

## II

Ingolf and Leif sailed by the guidance of the sun and the stars, and steered directly westward. For the first two days and nights a steady east wind filled the square sail and carried them steadily forwards. There were high spirits and much excited expectation on board. Indeed, it seemed as though the wind had been sent by Odin with the sole purpose of furthering their journey. But just as they had settled down in confidence that they were under the god's special protection the weather began to shift and change. Now it seemed, for the most part, as if one or another of the divinities had set himself fiercely against them, or as if Odin had suddenly become busy elsewhere.

The wind took the wrong direction, and seemed uninterruptedly occupied in settling private accounts with the towering waves of the sea. In the course of two days and nights it had gone several times round the horizon and varied through all degrees of strength from a moderate calm to what Vikings would mildly call a storm. And then all of a sudden it disappeared. They looked longingly for it — east, west, south, and north — for though they had cursed its vagaries heartily enough, it was still preferable to a dead calm. But it was absent, and remained absent. Unreliable as it had always been, it had gone off to other regions, and left them alone here in the midst of the sea. There lay the vessel, pitching lazily, and making no way at all. Where they were no one knew, and there was nothing to show them. Whither the wind had carried them, while it was still with them and blew alternately from all points of the compass, they could not find out. The sun and stars had only rarely been visible. The spirits of all on board were rapidly sinking. Matters were not improved when, after several days and nights of calm, there came gliding a cunning, silent bank of fog and swallowed them up, blotted them out from the eyes of heaven, swept all sight of sea and sky out of the world, and left the vessel lying, rocking loneliness, forgotten by all good powers on a strange sea.

There they lay while the days came and went — grey days which could only make marks on Ingolf's time-stick. For even though Ingolf was displeased enough with these days he kept a steady count of them, marked each of them off on his stick with the little notch that

was their due, and, for the rest, execrated them in silence.

Leif had given up all hope now ; morose and aggrieved, he surrendered himself to the power of chance. He sat most of the days on the gunwale with his legs dangling outside, singing from sheer despair. Only now and then he interrupted his song to hurl a violent succession of sanguinary curses in a penetrating, angry voice into the damp, foggy air.

With every day that passed, Ingolf became more silent and introspective. What was the obstacle in their way? Were the gods so much opposed to this journey that they were absolutely determined to prevent it?

He did not like being questioned regarding the number of days he had marked off. The days were quite bad enough without making them more by talking about them. And at last he flatly refused to answer questions regarding the number of the days. For long periods he would sit silent looking at his stick, forgetting to mark the days, with his mind full of inward longing and powerful exorcisms.

He heard that the crew were talking about drawing lots for a sacrifice. Ingolf was not narrow-minded. But he remembered the offerings which before his journey he had made to Odin, as well as the vows he had made of further offerings if the journey prospered. Odin had often fulfilled his wishes for less sacrifices than those. He really did not understand what was the matter with Odin this time.

Hallveig and Helga were the only ones on board

who, to some extent, kept up their spirits. To Hallveig it seemed quite natural; they were very well off, and the fog and the calm must some time come to an end. Every morning she awoke with the firm conviction that that day the fog would lift. Helga, on the other hand, had to pull herself together, in order not to be infected by the depression of the rest. Yet she was accustomed to do this, and on this occasion she had, besides, Hallveig's good-humour to support her. But their good temper seemed almost to put the crew into a still worse humour. Even Ingolf — not to speak of Leif — could sometimes be impatient at their unconcern. And one day, in answer to a cheerful remark of Hallveig's, he very curtly drew her attention to the fact that the water-casks were seriously near becoming empty. Hallveig looked at him steadily and a little astonished. Ingolf had never before seen that look in her eyes. She went to her hut without saying anything more.

Ingolf looked round for Helga. She stood by the gunwale, playing with Leif's hair. When Ingolf had thus ascertained that Hallveig was alone in the hut, he followed her into it. Hallveig was sitting and looking before her when he came. She did not meet his glance as usual, but remained sitting and staring into space with a troubled expression on her serious face. Ingolf stopped before her and laid his hand on her shoulder. Then Hallveig looked up at him. "It can do no good to give up," she said seriously; "that will not make things better. Have you not noticed how the men follow you with their eyes, and are disturbed by your looks? There is nothing left us, Ingolf, but to take

things as they come. The fog may lift some time. And since it has not rained for a long time, it may soon rain, so that we can again have the water-casks filled. And we have also beer and wine on board, so that we can get along for some time."

"What makes me uneasy," answered Ingolf, "is that we seem to be pursued by misfortune, and that I don't know at all where we are. It might almost seem as if the gods had forgotten us, or as if we had fallen under their displeasure. If the fog and the calm continue, and there is no rain for some time, it will soon be all over with us. You and Helga ought never to have been taken with us on this journey. I have also heard that the crew are beginning to talk among themselves of casting lots. Perhaps a sacrifice will be necessary."

Hallveig was silent for a long time. At last she sighed deeply and said: "I have never been able properly to understand how the gods can desire human sacrifices. Perhaps, however, I would have agreed on this occasion if I was quite sure that the lot would not fall on you. But I cannot rely on the gods so absolutely. Let us rather wait awhile, Ingolf."

Ingolf left her with the firm resolve henceforth to alter his outward demeanour. He saw that the first and foremost thing was his duty and obligation to exhibit to the crew a calm and untroubled face, be the outlook never so hopeless. The first man he met he greeted with a cheerful remark, and after that day he was altogether more lively and communicative.

When the crew saw what an alteration had taken place in Ingolf, they thought in themselves that he must

in some way or another have received a token from the gods. Their desire for a sacrifice and drawing of lots ceased. Ingolf's altered demeanour inspired them with hope and courage.

But the days went on, and one day the supply of drinking water ran out. During the night following the day when the last scoop of water had been equally divided among all on board, Ingolf did not sleep. And he could easily see that Hallveig lay awake by his side. But they did not talk. Ingolf was more and more convinced that the gods had for ever withdrawn their favour from him. Perhaps it was their intention to let him miserably perish here at sea. Would they not even grant him to die on land? Could they not even spare a place for a funeral mound for him and his? Ingolf reproached himself severely that he had involved Hallveig in his own and his race's ill-luck.

Towards morning they began at last to talk together in a whisper. Ingolf opened his whole mind to Hallveig, and confided to her his most secret thoughts and anxieties. Hallveig said that she had married him because she intended to share his fortunes whether they were good or bad. She feared neither life, nor death, nor the displeasure of the gods, if only she had him.

While they were still lying there and whispering together, Leif stood suddenly in the doorway and shouted. He had kept watch during the night, and had good news to tell. The fog was gone and the wind was gradually rising. He had given orders to hoist the sail, and now only wished to ask whither they should sail, for he did not know. The sky was overclouded all the time,

and the sun could not be seen. Would Ingolf come and see if *he*, perhaps, could scent out the right direction?

Ingolf was on his legs in an instant. All anxiety and trouble was blown away from his soul by the first puff of wind. He took counsel with his deepest instincts, and found a direction to sail in. The wind was rather slack at first, but then it had got out of the habit of blowing. In the course of the day it freshened to splendid sailing weather. There were birds on the water; they must be near some land. Towards evening they caught a glimpse of a dark streak ahead, which showed distinctly against the fog-banks on the horizon. There rose a shout on board: "Land in sight!" Then Helga wept. No one was astonished at it. Some of the men also felt a flutter at their hearts this time on sighting land again. But Hallveig stood quiet and undisturbed, staring at the dark streak ahead. What sort of land was it? Were they already there? That night no one thought of seeking sleep or rest.

Early in the morning they were among some precipitous green islands which were divided by narrow straits with strong currents. From the vessel they could here and there catch sight of smoke from houses and huts. This, then, was an inhabited land, and not the one they sought. One of the old men on board had been here before, and was able to inform them that these were the Faroe Isles. That reassured Ingolf; it meant they had not come out of their course. There was great joy on board. Here they could go on shore, feel firm ground under their feet, and provide themselves with water. There were some among the crew



who ventured to hint that the voyage had lasted long enough, but a look from Ingolf was enough to reduce them to silence. All depression and doubt had been swept out of his mind along with the fog.

The brothers now had all tubs, buckets, together with the empty barrels and casks which were on board, filled with water from a spring on the coast. When that had been seen to, they were so fortunate as to get good weather with a stiff breeze. It was again possible to sail by the sun and stars, straight to the west. They left the Faroe Isles astern and made for the open sea. The weather remained fine, with a light breeze blowing. The wind was certainly somewhat capricious both as regards force and direction. But it blew all the time, and that was what was needed. Only seldom could the vessel hold on a straight course; they were obliged to tack, and so the way became somewhat uncertain. Still they made progress.

On the seventh day after leaving the Faroes they at last sighted land. A large and wide-stretching land, crowned by white glaciers behind blue mountains, and land with broad, open fjords and bright streams which wound down green mountain-sides, rose from the sea before their wondering eyes.

This must be the land they sought. Here then it lay, solitary and uninhabited, far away in the uttermost part of the sea. It lay silent and patient, expecting them.

The land greeted them with sunshine and summer and blue mountains. Majestic it lay there, with skyward towering promontories and broad mouths of fjords

which, like open arms, offered them a royal welcome. No other land had ever received them with such a festal and solemn greeting as this gave them.

A strange silence spread on board the vessel. It was early in the morning that they sailed into a fjord full of swans. The blue surface of the fjord was completely covered with these white birds, which, with proudly lifted necks and in great flocks, swam to one side as the ship glided on. Many other birds swam among them — variegated eider-ducks and handsome water-fowl. But one did not notice them because of the white swans. Hallveig named the fjord Svanefjord.

The brothers had chosen this fjord because it was protected by a little group of islands which might make it more secure as a winter haven than the open fjords. They tacked a little to and fro, using a corner of their sail, and surveyed the land. Bare mountains rose on either hand. On the north was a strip of fertile land along the fjord; on the east side the waves broke freely at the base of the mountain. The land at the end of the fjord seemed fertile and inviting, but they could not find a landing-place which suited them.

Ingolf proposed that they should inspect a little more closely the nearest fjord south of the one they were in. He had seen from the ship that there lay a broad fjord sheltered by a small, low group of islands.

They tacked past a promontory and entered the other fjord. It was both broader and deeper than the one they had just come from, but was likewise full of swans! Hallveig laughed with gladness when she saw it. This fjord also must be called "Svanefjord," she declared.

They might be called North and South. She did not know there were so many swans to be found in the world. "Birds love this land," she said to herself.

Helga stood by her side. She compelled herself to smile and share Hallveig's gladness, but her heart was full of pain, for the beautiful land she saw here, and which Hallveig already seemed to love, could never be *hers*. She saw the swans, the mountains, and the green dales. But in her heart there was no room for anything but a quiet, slightly strange emotion. The scent of the pines from the islands at home was too keen in her memory. Ingolf and Leif stood silent and in a solemn mood, side by side; they looked at the land and did not say a word. They had stood thus a long time when Ingolf turned to his brother and said quietly: "What do you think of the land, Leif?"

"It is a big land and seems a good one," answered Leif, in a low voice.

"If only most of it was not barren mountain," said Ingolf, but his voice lacked the reservation which his words expressed.

"I think we might soon feel at home among these mountains," said Leif.

"It does not look unfriendly," Ingolf admitted.

In his inmost heart he was deeply moved. The strength and sternness of the mountains filled his mind with a peculiar excitement. Among these mountains the green dales and fertile stretches of land, which he caught a glimpse of at the end of the fjord, assumed a doubly home-like aspect.

Suddenly Leif awoke from his long reflection and si-

lent contemplation. Abruptly and unexpectedly, as always, a resolve had been born in his mind, and aroused him. "It is all the same to me what sort of a land it is—I shall settle here," he declared in an excited tone. "Since I have come, I think it would disappoint the land if I left it again. And I will not disappoint this land, which lies here so ready to receive me—so much is certain."

Ingolf was silent. Leif had given expression to his own thoughts. He felt so convinced at this moment that here it was his lot to settle and remain. But this feeling was followed in his mind by a peculiar anxiety which almost made him sorry. Was it a good land—a land where one could peacefully build and settle, and where his family could flourish in happiness and prosperity? Not himself alone, but his children and children's children should dwell here, if he determined to settle himself in the place.

The brothers chose a landing-place on the north side of the fjord, and steered thither. It was with strange feelings that they set foot on this new land, which from time immemorial had lain here behind the sea and the distance, alone with its birds. On sea and land, everywhere the birds swarmed. The questioning whistle of the golden plover and the rippling quaver of the curlew were the first sounds that greeted them as they trod the stones of the shore.

Ingolf and Leif immediately set the crew to work to bring the animals on land and to unload the vessel. They themselves proceeded to pitch their tents, after having selected a spot with thick green grass, well

protected from wind and weather by a projection of rock, and close to the brink of a small, clear stream. The kitchen utensils were brought up, and a fire kindled. The shore was covered with driftwood, so that there was plenty of fuel. Pots containing salted flesh were hung up; at last they got hot meat again. They could not remember that any meat had tasted so good as this hot salt flesh after the dried fish, preserved flesh, and hard and finally mouldy bread they had had on the sea voyage. They baked bread, too, and ate it warm from the embers. It was splendid to have soft bread between their teeth again.

Round them the animals dispersed, grazing eagerly over the fertile pastures. It was a pleasure to see the satisfaction with which they swallowed the green grass. Towards evening the vessel was so far unloaded that it could be brought ashore and rolled on logs over the ground. They had chosen a little cleft in the rocks for it to lie in shelter during the winter.

By the evening, when the men had crept into their skin bags and had lain down to sleep, Ingolf and Leif, Hallveig and Helga, still sat round the remains of the fire, but did not think of sleep. They sat silent, close to one another, and did not talk. The night was bright and still, and dew was falling. The fire gleamed palely in the night. Red ember-snakes writhed at the bottom of it. The fjord spread a shining surface, dotted white with sleeping swans. There was a peace and stillness over the land which filled their minds with a peculiar awe and sense of expectation.

## III

The summer they spent in South Svanefjord was, for the brothers and their wives, an unbroken succession of beautiful days. There was a peculiar atmosphere of peace and prosperity about the lonely settlement, where the fire burnt day and night under the cliff behind the tents, while on a rising ground close at hand their winter dwelling rose slowly from the ground. It was a house sixty feet in length, thirty in breadth, which the brothers were having built — a house with thick turf walls for a protection against the cold of winter, and adapted to be partitioned according to their needs when they had first roofed it in.

While their men worked at the dwelling and gathered in hay as winter fodder for the cattle, Ingolf and Leif let the days come and go. And whether they were sunny days or the fog hung in grey, soft, gliding belts down to the middle of the mountain-sides, all the days had a peculiar solemn solitariness and charm about them.

The land they had come to was after Leif's heart. It made quite a different impression on him to any other land he had visited. The sense of power that brooded over it, and the almost palpable solitude, swallowed up the unrest of his mind and gave him peace. The mountains' strongly marked and infinitely varied shapes, a little copse hidden among grey cliffs, close up to a glacier, the heavily pouring rivers in deep ravines, the fjords where the swans swam among other fowls like

royal dragon-ships among peaceful freighters, a seal bathing in the sun on a rock by the fjord, not wise enough to be afraid of men, the countless birds' nests with the snugly hidden, different-coloured eggs one came across everywhere, and then the soft, downy young ones hopping about between little hillocks — all filled his soul with a sense of wonder and calm hitherto unknown.

Ingolf and Leif made little excursions on their horses in the neighbourhood. They soon ascertained that the fjords north of the Svanefjords were very poor in pasture-land; the mountains descended for the most part steeply to the sea, while the land, on the other hand, seemed to become better the farther southward they went. When they had made that discovery they equipped themselves for a journey of some days in order to examine the land south of the Svanefjords more closely. Over a low, stony stretch of tableland they came to another inlocked fjord which was much broader than even the broad South Svanefjord. The greater part of the upland of this fjord was, however, covered with gravel and clay. Quite outside by the sea was a stretch of luxuriant meadow, and here and there stood rock-islets amid the sand, round which there were large green pastures. Farther up, right under the mountains, there was also pasture-land, and there they found the largest and most luxuriant wood they had yet seen. They came to a river with many rapidly flowing courses which streamed with clay-coloured, turbid water over a sandy and unsafe bottom. But they had caught sight of some sharp mountain-peaks far to the south-

west, and since it could scarcely be difficult to cross the ravines between them, they resolved to proceed thither and see what was to be found on the other side. It was generally the case with this land, that one was not satisfied till one had seen what there was on the other side of all the mountains which came in view. They passed with some difficulty the dangerous river-current, and rode farther along high, steep mountain declivities striped with many-coloured gravel.

They found a ravine between the mountain-peaks, and when they had reached the other side of the mountains, there opened on them, while they rode along the edge of the steep descents which led down to the lowland, a view, the like of which they had never seen. A fjord dotted with small green islands, wide-stretching meadows and pastures intersected by gleaming watercourses, a wide bluish ring of mountains which locked in the luxuriant region with a mighty curve, and behind all this in the south and west, glaciers — an immense, slightly arched stretch of sparkling snow with white offshoots to all ravines.

It was on a clear, sunny day at noon that they stood there and surveyed this region, which arrested their minds with a sense of solemn wonder and irresistible fascination such as no view had ever done before. In his rapture, Leif laid his hand upon Ingolf's shoulder and pressed it; he had tears in his eyes, and his large mouth quivered. They had dismounted from their horses and stood silent for a long time. And when they mounted again to examine the district further,



they rode on in silence. From that hour they were Icelanders; the land was theirs, and they belonged to it. In silence the compact was finally and irrevocably solemnized.

When they came back from their trip, Hallveig and Helga had an important and, as they themselves thought, serious piece of news to tell them. They had one day climbed up the green ascent above the encampment, quite up to the base of the cliffs, in order to get a wider view over the fjord and the district. And just as they sat and contemplated the low group of islands and a little island beyond it, they saw smoke rising from the island. It had been a perfectly calm and clear day; there could be no doubt that they had seen correctly. They had not said anything to the men, and they now only wished to ask Ingolf and Leif to be careful, and not to go about any more alone. Ingolf and Leif immediately put the larger of the two boats in the water, called some of their men, and bade them take their weapons with them. They wished to find out what kind of people they had for neighbours. It was in vain that Hallveig and Helga begged and prayed them not to insist on going out, and least of all in a little rowing-boat. The brothers were too resolved on finding out more about the smoke from the island. In answer to their wives they objected that the ship was too unwieldy, and was, moreover, not a ship of war. There was scarcely any chance of fighting; if there were people on the island, they were probably some peaceful, starving, shipwrecked men, whose

vessel had been driven to sea and lost. For the rest, they promised to be careful, but they were resolved to go out to the island that day.

So they rowed out thither. Even when they had got quite close to it, they could see no sign that it was inhabited. They rowed round it, and still saw no inhabitants or buildings. They determined to land, and chose a creek on the south side of the island. As soon as they had landed, they saw a wretched little boat, in which they would hardly have trusted themselves to cross a fjord, hidden among the rocks. They went farther up on the island, and found a hut well concealed in a hollow.

As they approached, a man came forth in a splendid cloak and head-dress, with a staff in his hands, and followed by some lean shapes black with dirt, and meanly clad. They came out from the hut, but remained standing before the door, without going towards them. They had seen this kind of people before, and immediately perceived that they had what were called Irish monks before them.

Both Leif and Ingolf, as well as several of their men, knew some Irish, and therefore went nearer in order to hear a little why these people dwelt here on a desert island.

The monks, one of whom carried a cup of water, evidently did not wish them to come too near them or their dwelling. The sworn brothers remained standing at some distance and questioned them. The monks answered their questions reluctantly, but they gathered from them that they had lived here for several years,

that they had long since heard reports of this land, and that other monks before them had journeyed to seek it out. They had not seen any of them, but the land was wide, and they had remained here on the island where they had first landed. This information Ingolf at last extracted from the monks, with many questions answered, for the most part, in monosyllables.

When the brothers could not think of anything more to ask them, and were going down to their boat again, the man with the head-dress, cloak, and staff stopped them with a question. "Why had they come hither?"

Ingolf told them that they had come here to look at the land, and intended to settle here.

His words aroused a movement and disturbance among the monks, and their leader gave him to understand plainly that the land was sanctified and reserved by God for Christian men; no heathen had ever settled here, nor ever could. Every kind of misfortune would strike them if they migrated hither, unless they first let themselves be baptized and went over to the Christian faith. Ingolf answered them quietly that they must grant him that it would ill become him to be less faithful to his gods than they were to theirs. The monk answered that heathen did not trust in gods but in idols. Ingolf answered that the Ases had hitherto protected him and his family. Then bidding them farewell, he went off, followed by Leif and his men. They saw the monks sprinkling with water the places where they had trod. Then Ingolf smiled and Leif laughed aloud. The monks sprinkled even the waves which had licked the heathen's boat.

When Ingolf and Leif returned, they were able to quiet Hallveig and Helga with the news that they were peaceful and harmless people who inhabited the little island. Their only weapon was a little water in a cup! After that they called the island "Monks' Island." When the autumn came with cold and sleet the sworn brothers already sat warm in their turf-house. Before the dwelling Ingolf had caused to be built a smaller edifice, where he set up small, roughly carved wooden images of Odin and Thor. And when the time for the autumn sacrificial feast was come, he offered them an ox (they must share the offering as best they could), and had a little feast.

Leif held aloof from all things of that sort. During the twenty-four hours of the feast, he went out catching birds by day and slept quietly in his bed by night. In his lonely wanderings the brown leaves of the autumn rustled round his feet and spoke to him. Leif did not think much about catching birds. He enjoyed being alone with the mountains and the blue sky. Wherever he met a family of grouse who held faithfully together he let them go. He only aimed at solitary birds, caught them round the neck with a practised fling of his light line, and drew them to himself with one sweep through the air.

Ingolf's sacrificial feast and all his devotion to the gods was a continually recurring trial to Leif's brotherly feeling. He could not reconcile himself to Ingolf's constant and devoted adherence to the worship of these ugly wooden idols. Time after time he was

obliged, in order to control his rising displeasure, to remind himself that Ingolf never interfered in his beliefs and thoughts concerning the gods, and therefore had a right to expect the same from him. But in his heart Leif scorned and despised Ingolf's gods, and it was inevitable that some of this violent antipathy should sometimes glance on his brother.

Singularly enough, on the other hand, Leif did not take it at all ill that Helga held fast to her own and her fathers' faith, without its being clear to him that he possessed in that, as it were, a proof of her steadfastness. He did not at all wish that Helga should forsake her gods to follow him in his want of faith and contempt for them. The day that she did so would have given a severe blow to Leif's happiness. So and no otherwise was his nature.

The winter came with hard frost but without much snow. The weather for ski-ing, which Ingolf and Leif were waiting for in order to show Hallveig and Helga a little of the country south of the Svanefjords, did not come. Their disappointment was, however, mitigated by the fact that their sheep and goats could, contrary to expectation, go out and get their food the whole of the winter, with the exception of a few stormy days. The brothers came to the conclusion that it was a land where relatively few people might possess many sheep. They also noticed that sheep and goats both in winter and summer went up to the mountains and did not remain below in the luxuriant pastures. It was evident that the grass they grazed among the stones upon the

apparently barren mountains must be of peculiar strength, for the sheep's bodies remained stout and their wool white.

The goats had found some holes in the mountain near the house. There they remained at night, took refuge there in bad weather, and were comfortable.

In spite of the short days and long nights and the great solitude the winter proved by no means long. Neither the brothers nor Hallveig nor Helga felt the solitude oppressive; it brought them into closer intimacy with each other in a way that no summer days could have done. They sat round the fire, busy with their little occupations, and talked cheerfully and confidentially together. Ingolf and Leif carved wood, Hallveig and Helga spun yarn and dyed it in different shades of heather-colour, made mittens and handkerchiefs, or artistically woven bands of it.

In the middle of the winter Hallveig gave birth to a boy, whom Ingolf sprinkled with his own hand with water and named Thorsten after Thor, and in remembrance of his former friend, Haasten, from whom fate had so painfully severed him. When Hallveig had given birth to her boy, Helga became extremely solitary in soul. She never could find any sign that she was with child. When no one could see her, she wept bitter tears about it, but gave no outward sign. Outwardly she was uniformly cheerful and bright, and showed to each and all an untroubled demeanour. It was something she kept to herself, like the scent of the pines from the islands. Spring came, with mildness in the air and vernal winds. As soon as it could be managed, the ship

was launched, loaded, and made fit for sea. The sworn brothers needed as much as possible of the summer to make preparations for their migration here the next spring, to exchange those of their movable goods and the live-stock which they could not take with them for useful wares, and in general to arrange their affairs in Norway before they left the country for good. All of them, except Helga, left the new land, though they had only been there a year, with regret. The land had been a good friend to them, and they were loth to bid it farewell even for a short time. When they sailed away from it, it lay there so quiet and silent, gazing after them, as it were. Before they departed, the migratory birds had all come back. The land lay bathed in sunshine, with cheerful bird-life on the fjord and on the shore.

Leif, the restless, was no more eager for journeys. He would rather have remained where he was, and not have travelled to Norway at all. But even Leif had to grant that the plan was impracticable. The provisions for the journey, which they had brought with them, were rapidly decreasing, and, moreover, it would be difficult for Ingolf when he came back to find just the same spot in the land, dependent as he was on weather and sea. Besides, Leif saw clearly that Helga, though she had unhesitatingly acquiesced in his wild proposal, preferred that they should travel with the others. Helga was willing to sacrifice everything for Leif, even the scent of the pines from the islands at home. But when she gave her brave assent to remain, her self-command failed her a little, and her lips quivered slightly. The whole

winter she had looked forward with joy to the moment when she should sail between the islands to Dalsfjord. Like a secret treasure, she had concealed the consciousness that *that* was in store for her, in her steadfast heart. That remained there till Leif started with the others. But when he sailed away from the land, the old unrest was again awake in his soul.

## IV

The brothers were favoured by a good wind as they crossed the sea to Norway. Only ten days after they had sailed out between the skerries outside the Svane-fjords, the vessel lay before Ingolf's house in Dalsfjord.

When they disembarked, it was only Helga who felt as though she had come home. Ingolf and Leif had already separated themselves in their hearts from their birthplace, and Hallveig, whose home was wherever Ingolf was, had never been intimately acquainted with this district.

Leif had already on the return journey expressed his wish to go on a Viking expedition in the summer. He gave many reasons — among others, that he needed serfs. Further, he alleged that it was the simplest way of obtaining goods for their journey to Iceland the next spring. Ingolf could arrange their affairs in Dalsfjord while he was out trading for them both. Leif spoke much about this important trading and about his very inconvenient want of serfs. They were dear to buy, and it was easiest to take them where one could find



them. All these and more reasons were adduced by Leif. But he concealed his real reason for the journey, which was that it was impossible for him to conceive how he should spend a summer at home at Dalsfjord. His blood had suddenly become restless. His mind was like a bow which had been long on the strain.

Helga, who, as was her way, always left matters to Leif, made no objection to his plan. On the contrary, she gave it her warmest assent. But now it appeared that there would be no more sunshine in the summer which would be the last she spent at home.

Ingolf, for his part, knew Leif. And he was forced to admit that the arrangement was not a bad one. They certainly needed goods, and would obtain them most cheaply by fetching them themselves. For the rest, whatever private plans Leif had in his expedition were his own affair. It was thus already decided on the way that Leif should go on a Viking expedition.

As soon as they landed at Dalsfjord, Leif set to work equipping himself for his expedition. He was somewhat late in that, and had therefore to hurry his preparations as much as possible. He allowed himself leisure neither for sleep nor meals. In great haste he collected all the goods which he and Ingolf had in stock, and loaded his dragon-ship with them, together with the other ship which he still had in reserve. This time he had to be content with two ships; he could not well man more, and, moreover, they had not goods for more than two.

Only a few days after his homecoming Leif sailed out again from Dalsfjord and left Helga alone with the

pine-tree scent from the islands. Leif did not guess that the pain of separation which left in his mind only a fleeting pang, filled Helga with burning anxiety and unrest, which should not vanish till she had him again.

Leif sailed out over the sea and let the sea-breezes, the sense of solitary independence, together with the expectation of dangers and adventures, absorb his mind.

He sailed to Ireland, and traded and ravaged wherever he came. This time Ingolf had forgotten to exact any promises of caution from him. Leif had latterly appeared to him so altered that he simply had not considered it necessary. Leif was therefore completely free, unfettered by promises or considerations of any kind. And in the consciousness that this was now the last time he was on a Viking expedition, he displayed a daring and exuberance in his conduct which filled his men with joy and sent several of them to Odin.

During the summer Leif acquired, more by pillaging than by commercial genius, a very large supply of all kinds of goods, mostly valuable cloths and metals. In the course of the summer he succeeded in catching ten serfs — ten wiry, grimy men — who bore names like Duftak, Gerrod, Skjoldbjarn, Haldor, Drafdrit, and the like, sour-looking men with evil eyes, but good enough as serfs, tough at rowing as they sat chained to the oars, and enduring in all kinds of work. Luck, which only unwillingly forsakes the bold, followed Leif wherever he went. On one occasion, towards the close of the summer, it nearly went ill with him.

He had landed with his men on an apparently de-

served coast, which was protected by skerries and rocky islands with strong currents between them — a place which only Leif could think suitable for landing. He caused his ships, loaded with the costly booty of the summer, to be rowed in between these skerries, in order to hide them in a rocky creek, which he had selected during a solitary excursion, while he with his men went for a foray in the neighbourhood. For this expedition he needed as many of his men as possible, the object being a very large and presumably rich town. Leif left the ships in the creek with only a few men to look over the chained serfs, whom he dared not allow to go free as long as he was so near their native place.

With the rest of his men Leif went on shore and betook himself to the wood. They were all full of great excitement and expectation. This was to be the last great adventure of the summer, and Leif expected a booty which might perhaps make it necessary to conquer a vessel to carry it in. Time would show!

The wood they intended to cross covered a steep mountain-side, from the summit down to the coast, and it was traversed by deep, rocky ravines covered with bushes. Leif and his men had not penetrated far into this very impassable wood when they were attacked by an armed force far superior to their own. The people of the town must have had spies out along the coast. They were not only outwardly but really prepared for their coming. Leif had just shouted to his men to fight each for himself, first and foremost to get away and save the ships, when the enemy was on them with strident war-cries and loud clashing of weapons. Leif

had no time to see how his men fared. The people of the town had at once seen who was the leader, and since it was the leader whom it was the most important to strike, they flocked round him with lifted axes and upraised swords. Leif had to sacrifice his spear to one of the two nearest attackers; the other's head he split with his ax, but next moment a swarm of howling Irish were pressing on him. They did not, however, surround him, a fact which Leif, who was striking doughtily about him with ax in one hand and sword in the other — his shield he had thrown away — had no time to think about. They pressed him back in between the trees.

Leif, who at the moment only thought that six was the smallest number he could reasonably take with him to Valhalla, and was still short of two, suddenly lost his foothold. It happened so unexpectedly that his sword dropped from his hand, but with his ax he hooked himself fast to a tree-root in falling, and there he hung, swinging in the air, over the edge of a ravine. His attackers had raised a great shout of victory when he fell. They now gathered on the edge of the ravine, stood there and laughed at him, and made themselves merry at his plight. They pricked at him for amusement with their spears, while in loud tones they debated which would be the most amusing way to see him die. A proposal that they should slowly prick the life out of him gained the day. So they began to prick him in turn, each of them wishing to have his share of the pleasure.

Leif was in a desperate situation. He looked down at the bottom of the ravine, where there grew heather

and bushes. He had no other resource than to let himself fall and see if he escaped with life. He wasted no time in reviewing the situation; he simply let go and let himself fall. At the moment he fell he perceived that men spread themselves on both sides of him, to find a way down to the ravine and to surround him there if he escaped from the fall with his life and whole limbs. The fall absorbed both his body and his thoughts. He turned two somersaults in the air and struck against something hard; there was a singing in his ears, and he fainted for a time.

When he came to himself again, he was lying on his back in some high heather and staring up at the light green leaves on some scattered stunted trees. He had a distinct consciousness of danger without at once remembering where it threatened him, and grasped involuntarily after his ax and spear. He grasped in vacancy, and when he discovered that he was weaponless, the whole situation was suddenly clear to him. In an instant he was on his legs, satisfied himself that no bones were broken, picked up his helmet, and, involuntarily stooping to half his height, set off, running as hastily as his somewhat stiff limbs allowed, into the thickest part of the wood, and took the way down to the coast.

He had already run a good way when he heard men approaching, talking loudly, farther down the ravine. He halted and stood stiff and motionless. Only his eyes roamed round to seek a hiding-place, but he saw nothing resembling one anywhere. A little hollow in the ground close to his feet might perhaps afford room for his body, but by no means could it conceal him.

With every moment that passed, while he stood there without any chance of escape, he could more distinctly hear his heart beating. He already imagined to himself how it would be to have his entrails drawn out and to be led round a tree. But at the same instant, when he was on the point of giving up and of flying up the ravine where he was quite sure to meet other foes, his eye fell on a large flat stone. There was salvation! Trembling over his whole body with excitement, he raised the stone on its edge and rolled it towards the hollow. Then he lay down, wrapped his cloak round him, shrunk himself up as well as he could, and pushed the stone right over him. There he lay and heard his pursuers come tramping. From their talk he understood that they were quite sure that he still lay where he had fallen, and feared that he had broken his neck, so that all further amusement for them was over. All the same, they urged each other to have a good look for him. If they found the red-haired devil, he should be flayed alive. Leif lay there under his flat stone with a corner of his cloak between his teeth. An irresistible convulsive fit of laughter seized him and shook his whole body. Every moment he might be prepared for them to raise the stone; he did not know whether it covered him completely. But here he lay, and there they went, rejoicing at the idea of flaying him alive. Less than that was needed to make Leif merry.

The men passed. Their voices died away gradually farther up the ravine. Leif let some moments pass, then cautiously raised the stone. After taking a good look round he set out, crouching as he ran, to the har-

bour. He reached the shore without seeing more enemies. He stood for a little, recovering himself in the cool air from the sea. He was tolerably sure that they would remain so keenly on the watch that he could hardly in full daylight get to his ship, if indeed he still had a ship at all! It was impossible for him to know if things had gone better with his men than with himself, or if the ships had already fallen into the enemies' hands. It was really a nice mess that he had got into! When would he see Helga again?

Leif let his gaze wander over the fjord, and caught sight of an island with some stunted fir trees a little distance out. This island was surrounded by smaller ones, and appeared to him, at that moment, very attractive. His enemies would scarcely think of looking for him outside the borders of the land.

Leif did not reflect very long. He hid his cloak, helmet, and whatever might be in his way when swimming thither, piled stones up on them, and let them lie. Then he flung himself into the waves. He swam on his back the first part of the way in order to be able to keep an eye on the land and to see if he was noticed. He could not see the least sign of life on shore. He reached the island safe and sound, and crawled, wet and weary, up its smooth, rocky side. He dragged himself under the shelter of a stone where he could lie and let the sun bathe him; luckily it shone brightly and warmly, in spite of the lateness of the season. He settled himself comfortably and closed his eyes. Shortly afterwards he fell asleep. He awoke from uneasy dreams; the light of the setting sun fell dazzling on his face. He had, then,

slept the whole day. And what sort of a coverlet was that which he had over him? Closer inspection showed it to be a grey cloak of coarse material. Leif looked round him with wide-open eyes, and caught sight of a man squatting a little distance off, and regarding him with mild, attentive eyes.

Leif did not place much confidence in the mildness of his glance. Involuntarily he felt around for his weapons. There were no weapons there — now he remembered the whole affair — but the man there seemed likewise unarmed. Also, he smiled, and for the rest was so thin and wasted that he could hardly be dangerous. What sort of a man was he? He looked ragged and starving. His hair and beard were tangled like a bird's nest. There was an atmosphere of death about him. Only in his eyes and smile was there life — a gentle and, at the same time, intense life.

The man rose and disappeared behind a projecting rock. Leif thought this very strange conduct, and remembered, when he was out of sight, that he had not heard his step at all. Was he still asleep and dreaming? Was it a living man he had seen or a ghost? No, there he came again, whoever he was. He had bare legs, which explained why he walked noiselessly, and, for the rest, appeared altogether wretched and harmless. This time he came up close to Leif with some shellfish, which he opened with a practised hand, merely with the help of a sharp-edged stone. Leif ate a couple of the shellfish, being ravenously hungry, and would have gladly thanked this friendly and strange man, but his disgust



was too strong for him, and he declared himself satisfied.

Then the strange man smiled anew, an indulgent smile, and ate the rest of the shellfish himself. When he had finished, he asked Leif how he was, if he could rise, and how he came to be lying here on his island. Leif trumped up a long story about having fallen overboard from a ship. "The current had seized him," he said, "and carried him hither." He found it best at the same time to show the man quite clearly, in order that he might make no mistake, that he not only could rise, but that he was altogether quite sound.

The man smiled again, whether on account of his story or his slightly threatening gestures, Leif was not sure, and asked him no more, but rose quietly and bade Leif follow him. He led him over to the other side of the island to the mouth of a little cave. "I live here," he said in his gentle voice. "You are the first guest who has paid me a visit, and the only man I have seen for many years. Assuredly God had His special purpose in sending you hither, my brother, however that may have happened. If you will share my cave with me for the night, you are welcome. In the morning you can swim to the shore, if you will, and are a strong swimmer. You can also perhaps remain here, if you prefer it."

"What are you doing here?" asked Leif, who, to his astonishment, could discover neither the roving eye nor mistrustful behaviour of an outlaw in this mild, quiet man. "Why do you live alone on this desert island?"

"I serve my God," answered the man gently and seriously, making the sign of the Cross. Then Leif suddenly became aware that it was one of the mad Irish monks whom he had before him.

From that moment he did not fear the man any more. The monks were peaceful people, mad though they were. But there was something mysterious about the man which caused Leif to feel by no means comfortable in his society.

"How do you live?" Leif asked, after a long pause. The man smiled his gentle smile, and pointed to a pot-shaped hollow in the rock, which stood filled to the brim with sea-water. "At high tide God sends me sometimes a little food," he said contentedly, "or I dive for shell-fish when I am hungry. There is also plenty of seaweed here. I do not need much. Shall not God who feeds the birds also feed me?"

"How do you serve your God?" asked Leif, growing curious.

"I pray, fast, and lead a pure life," answered the monk quietly.

"Who is your God?" Leif questioned further.

"The one true God, the Trinity — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost," answered the monk in his gentle voice, and again made the sign of the Cross.

"What is His name?" Leif continued.

He had sat down on a stone step outside the mouth of the cave and fixed his wondering eyes on the monk.

"He is called Jehovah; His Son, whose sacred name

is Jesus Christ, let Himself be born as man, and shed His blood for men, to wash away their sins."

Leif was silent. He remembered carved and painted images he had seen of a God they called Jesus Christ. He hung nailed to a cross, with blood dripping from His hands and feet, from His thorn-crowned head, and from a wound in His side. Leif had always despised this God, who, according to the narrative, had willingly let Himself be killed and hung up upon a cross of wood. He did not comprehend the love of such a wretched divinity which could make a man like this monk live his life on this desert island, merely to pray to Him and thank Him. A powerless God He must be — much more wretched than even Odin and Thor. And yet He could obtain such power over men.

The monk had seated himself on a stone directly opposite Leif. The last rays of the sun fell on his back, and made his grey hair glow like a golden glory round his head. Leif remembered having seen this gold ring round the head, and he sat and began to feel quite strange and uneasy in his mind.

"Shall I tell you about Jesus Christ?" asked the monk at last, in a voice that was soft and ingratiating like a woman's.

"No," answered Leif, not without a certain fear in his soul, which distinctly betrayed itself in his voice. "Tell me rather of something else."

The monk sighed sorrowfully. "As you will, my brother. The Lord is mighty, and I am but the least of His instruments. Perhaps He has reserved the grace

of delivering your soul for another and worthier than myself. What shall I tell you, brother?"

"Tell me something about foreign lands," said Leif, who had a dim consciousness that there could hardly be anything which this man did not know.

"I cannot tell you about foreign lands," answered the monk gently. "I have not seen any other country except Ireland. And I do not feel the want of it. The wickedness of the world is great in the lands. The Devil rules most lands where people dwell. The Lord has of His mercy granted me this lonely island, and my only wish is to live here in peace till He takes me to Himself in His glory."

He was silent for a while, and reflected. "But I can read to you of a place called Paradise," he said, breaking off his meditations. Then he rose and crept into the low mouth of the cave.

A little while after he came back with a roll in his hand. When he opened it, Leif saw that it consisted of some pieces of skin covered over with strange signs.

The monk sat down and began to read in a monotonous and devout voice:

"There is a place that is called Paradise. It is not in heaven nor upon earth, but between heaven and earth, at an equal distance from both, as it was fixed there by God. Paradise is forty miles higher than the Flood rose at its highest. Paradise is of the same length and breadth on all sides. There is no hill nor valley there. There comes never frost, there falls never snow. The earth is luxuriant and fruitful there, but there are no evil beasts nor dangers nor defects of

any kind. There is a pure well, which is called the well of life. There is a splendid and beautiful wood called 'Radion saltus,' the leaves of which never fade. Each of its trees is straight and round like a spar, and so high that the top is invisible. There are all kinds of trees which stand in complete beauty and bear all manner of blossoms and beautifully coloured apples and fruits of all kinds. There no leaves fall from the branches. The wood stands in the midst of Paradise. One of the fruit trees was forbidden to Adam; in its fruit was hidden the knowledge of good and evil. There is neither hate nor hunger, and never is there night nor darkness, but always perpetual day. The sun shines there seven times more strongly than in this world, for its light is increased with the light of all the stars. There walk Angels, keeping all things in order in joy and pleasure. Thither have the souls of good men gone (and shall go and dwell there till Doomsday) since God opened the place when He took thither the soul of the Thief who died upon the cross.

“In Paradise there is a bird which is called the Phœnix. It is very large, and wonderful is the fashion of its creation, and it is the King of all birds. It bathes in the well of life, and then flies up on that tree which is the highest in Paradise, and sits in the sun. Then it shines with a light like that of the sun's rays. Its whole body gleams like gold, its feathers are like God's angels, its breast is beautiful, and its beak resembles its feathers. Its eyes are like crystal, and its feet like blood. But when this beautiful bird, the

Phœnix, flies from Paradise to the land of Egypt and dwells there five weeks, all kinds of birds gather there and sing round it in all manner of ways. Then the men who dwell there hear that and gather round it from everywhere, and speak as follows: 'Welcome, Phœnix, to our land! Thou shinest like red gold; thou art the King of all the birds' Then the people of the land make another phœnix of wax and copper which resembles the old one as much as possible. All the birds fall at its feet and honour it with a glad voice. Along its back there runs a red stripe, beautiful as burnt gold. When its fifth week is passed, the beautiful Phœnix flies again to Paradise. All the birds fly with it, some below it, some above it, on both sides. But when they cannot follow it any longer they return home."

The monk paused and looked at Leif, who sat bowed opposite him with open mouth and eyes. When the monk saw how absorbed his hearer was, he smiled and continued:

"It happened four thousand years before the birth of Christ (one millennium had passed) that the Phœnix had become old, and gathered round it a great number of birds, in order to bring together a great pile of fuel. But by God's will it happened so that the sun shone on the pile of fuel and the sun's warmth kindled a fire in it. But the Phœnix fell in the midst of the fire and was burned to ashes. But the third day afterwards it rose from the dead and was young again, and went to the Well of Life and bathed. Then its feathers grew again, as beautiful as they had ever been. It becomes old in the course of a thousand winters, then it burns itself

again to ashes, and rises each time young once more. But no one knows, except God alone, whether it is a male or a female bird."

The monk stopped. The sun had gone down, and the dusk of twilight filled the air. He could no longer see to distinguish the characters. He rolled up his skin-scroll carefully together and tied a band round it.

Leif had swallowed his words to the end with eager ears. At the same time the monk's droning way of reading had had a soporific effect upon him. When the monk was silent for a moment, Leif gave a deep yawn and felt a strange weariness in all his limbs. The next moment he fell asleep where he sat, with his head propped on his hands.

The monk let him sit and sleep while he uttered a long and humble prayer to God, that it might be granted him to save this heathen's soul from destruction and the outer darkness.

Then he awoke Leif gently, and bade him follow him into the cave and share his straw bed and his cloak with him, for it was now cold outside.

Leif awoke and saw that it was already night, with a pale glimmer of the moon behind black clouds. Now the time had really come. But he was not a little curious to learn more about the monk's cave, and, besides, it was perhaps best to let him fall asleep before he left the island.

The monk struck a light and kindled a shaving. Then he crept into the low mouth of the cave. Leif crept after him, and the first thing he set eyes upon was a magnificent sword with a golden hilt and gold inlaid

blade. It stood set up against the wall in the innermost part of the cave. It was the most beautiful sight which at the moment could meet Leif's eyes, and it was impossible for him to avert his gaze from the shining sword. When he noticed the monk's look fixed on him, he compelled himself to ask, in an indifferent tone, how it was he possessed such a valuable sword, as he was so poor and peaceful.

"That sword I inherited from my father," answered the monk gently and as it were apologetically. "I brought it with me here so that it should not do more harm than it has already done among men. I first intended to throw it into the sea, but it is so splendid. I have never been able to bring myself to do that, and it does no harm here in my cave."

He took it in his hand with obvious tenderness, and showed it to Leif. Leif dared not touch it for fear of betraying his covetousness.

The monk stood and contemplated the sword, and said, as though reflecting: "They who slay with the sword shall perish with the sword."

Leif believed that he was pronouncing a spell which belonged to the sword, and smiled incredulously. Immediately afterwards he threw himself down on the pallet of straw, as though he were weary and sleepy, and only thought of rest.

The monk replaced the sword, put out the light, laid himself down at Leif's side, and arranged his cloak over them both, so that his guest had a brother's share. Leif lay wide awake, wondering whether he should succeed in finding his men, and whether he should see his



ships again. Soon afterwards Leif heard the monk snoring, and began to twist and turn himself, to see if that would wake him. No, the monk slept deeply and soundly; his snoring filled the cave with the peace of sleep and night.

Then Leif rose stealthily from the pallet, groped his way to the sword, took hold of it, although with a little prick in his conscience, and crept on all fours noiselessly out of the cave, followed by the unconscious snoring of the monk. When he stood outside in the dark night, he raised himself erect and breathed freely. He was not at all sure whether he still had his ships and men, or whether all his men were killed, and the ships taken possession of by the enemy. But he again held a sword in his hand. Leif only stopped for a moment outside the mouth of the cave. Then with long, noiseless strides he crossed over the island and plunged into the water. He held the sword between his teeth and swam as best he could.

Leif found his cloak and other articles of clothing where he had left them. He had much feared lest they should be gone, and the discovery of them have served as a guide to the enemy. He put his clothes on and then began to listen intently in all directions. When he could not hear any movement or noise anywhere, he set off running along the shore in the direction of the creek where he had left his ships. The last part of the way he crept through the wood. He reached the creek without having come across hindrances of any kind. And out there lay his ships. They were lying farther out than when he had left them, and to Leif it seemed a

good sign. This time he tied his cloak in a bundle on his back, took the sword between his teeth, and, thus equipped, swam out to the ships. He swam as noiselessly and cautiously as possible, so that he might be able to turn quickly if it should prove that it was not his men who were in possession of the ships.

When he got within a bowshot of the ships, his old headman gave the alarm, and asked in a grim voice: "Who goes there?"

Leif answered with a low whistle, which they all knew, and there was great excitement and gladness on board. He had a rope thrown to him. Immediately afterwards he swung himself over the gunwale and stood wet and dripping among his men, with a strange sword between his teeth.

"Leif! Leif!" they shouted, and all wanted to touch him. Leif asked hastily how many men they had lost. It appeared that they had only three killed and two wounded. The rest had got on board safe and sound. Questions hailed down upon him. His men had really not expected to see him again, and were frenzied with delight and impatient to hear what had happened to him.

Before Leif would tell them anything, he questioned them thoroughly, and learnt that they had intended to remain lying here for some days, if the weather allowed, in case he should return, or hoping at least that they might learn something of his fate in some other way.

All the men on board the dragon-ship were gathered in a cluster round Leif, their eyes fixed on his splendid sword. Leif took off his wet clothes and put on dry

ones. Then he crept into his bearskin bag and shook himself with a sense of satisfaction. The men took their places round him and waited patiently to hear his story. Lying stretched on his back among his sitting men, with the pale moonlight flickering over his face, Leif began his narrative.

He began with his fall down the ravine. He told them how he had first hooked himself firm with his ax, and then had been obliged to let go of it and to drop when the men had begun to prick him. He told of his awaking without a weapon, and of his flight. He only related briefly the adventure with the flat stone under which he had concealed himself. His men listened, breathless with excitement.

When Leif was about to tell of his visit to the cave he suddenly paused. He noticed, to his surprise, that he really did not like to tell how he had got possession of his sword. But it was precisely about the sword that his men were most curious to hear.

"The sword?" asked the old headman in a husky voice, when he had been silent for a while.

"Yes, now comes the most wonderful thing of all," answered Leif reflectively. And, staring at the pale sickle of the moon, he rallied all his inventive powers and continued: "I had at last come up out of the ravine and was wandering in the wood. I do not know how long I ran about without an idea where I was. But suddenly I stood at the entrance of a great cave in the earth. I slipped into it in order to let the darkness hide me. When I had gone a good way in, I heard a strange sound farther on in the cave. I stole forward

and caught sight, in the dark, of a man who sat and sang. His head waggled forward and backward and to the sides, and his song penetrated my bones and marrow. His eyes rolled about in his head as though he were possessed. His face was yellow and blue, and there issued a strong odour from him, for he was not a living man, but a dead one. A little behind him hung this sword, and it shone on the wall of the cave. As I was weaponless, my life depended on my getting hold of the sword. I stole, therefore, farther on, and succeeded in slipping past him without his noticing me. But, just as I was going to seize the sword, I stumbled over a stone on the floor of the cave, and at the same instant I had the dead man on me."

Leif was so absorbed in his story that a cold sweat burst out on his forehead at the narrative of this imaginary fight. His men listened in deathlike silence, staring at him with wide-open eyes, and pressing involuntarily closer to each other.

"So near to the dead I have never been," Leif continued, and took a deep breath. "You have no idea what power there is in a dead man's bones. He crushed me as though with claws of iron. The most uncomfortable part was, that wherever I seized hold of him the flesh slipped away under my grip, and I held the bare bone-pipes with my hands. And there was a most intolerable smell which nearly suffocated me. Moreover, the whole time he kept wheezing foam into my face." Leif stopped with a groan, and with the back of his hand wiped the sweat from his brow. He lay

there white as a corpse, with burning eyes, in the pale moonlight.

“At last I succeeded in getting him under me,” he said in a lowered voice, “and putting out my utmost strength I pushed him against the stone he had sat upon, and at last I broke his back. While he lay there, and before I had seized the sword to cut off his wretched head, his rotten tongue continued to spit out curses. I will not repeat them, for they were terrible. Only so much I will tell you, that he said that there was a spell on this sword, that whosoever should kill with it should die with it.”

Leif's old headman, who during the last part of this narrative had panted like a sick man, suddenly sprang up in great excitement. “Throw the cursed sword overboard,” he shouted in a shaky voice, with his whole body trembling. Leif reached after the sword, and clutched its golden hilt firmly. “No!” he answered decidedly. “I have risked too much to gain it.”

The old man broke down with a hiccoughing sob, which sent an ice-cold shudder through the bones and marrow of Leif and all the rest.

“What did you do then with the dead man?” asked one at length, with his teeth chattering.

“I cut his head off and laid it by his feet,” Leif answered curtly, and gave a sigh of relief. Since there was no more to tell, Leif remained lying silent. His men continued sitting silent and motionless round him.

Leif found himself wondering that his meeting with the monk had suddenly become so distant and unreal. Was it not something which he had dreamt? How was

it, really? Had he not been fighting with a dead man? His body was so strangely stiff. And if not, why should he have this smell in his nostrils? Leif no longer knew himself what to believe. The drowsiness of sleep slurred the clearness of his thought and confused the real with the unreal.

The old man had gradually become silent. For a while he sat motionless, with his head wrapped in a corner of his cloak. Then he let the corner fall and continued to sit and look at Leif. When at last he spoke, his voice had resumed its deep, quiet tone. "In memory of your wonderful experience and great adventure, you shall hereafter be called 'Hjor-Leif,'" he said solemnly to Leif.

Leif smiled with half-closed eyes; then they closed quite. He slept peacefully and calmly as though he had never been engaged in fighting a dead man.

His men remained sitting quite silent around him. They did not talk together. They had conceived a great fear in their souls which the moon's unearthly light considerably increased. They were simply afraid to lie down and close their eyes and fall asleep. They could not understand how Leif could lie there and sleep so comfortably after such an adventure. Their admiration for him had never been greater than now. They would like to know whether he would be afraid to encounter the gods themselves. They had never seen fear in his eyes. It was certainly right that he should have the sword affixed to his name and be called Hjor-Leif.

Leif awoke of his own accord at sunrise. Then he

saw his men still in a circle round him. He broke into a loud fit of laughter when he saw their stupid eyes and faces weary with watching.

“Beer! Beer!” he shouted, and sprang up. “Plenty of beer for all the men! Drink now, boys!”

He cheered them up. The most slack of them he whirled round and capsized and thumped till there was a roar of merriment around him.

When Leif had emptied a couple of jugs of beer he felt hungry and demanded food. For a whole day and night he had had nothing except two raw shellfish, if *that* were not something which he had only dreamt. At any rate, his hunger was keen and insatiable. With continually increasing wonder his men stood round him and watched him devour a hearty meal. He was the only one on board who had an appetite. An icy dread instilled by the moonlight still possessed his men like bodily nausea. Even the beer which he had given them they drank more from obedience than from pleasure.

When Leif had made them first stir themselves and then totter a little on their legs, he set them at the oars and bade them set to work like the boys they were! They should only think of their wives and dearest ones, and for the rest row as though a dead man were after them. Leif had had enough adventures for the present. Now he wanted to get home to Norway.

## V

Helga, the faithful and anxious, was once more to see the summer die on the fields and in the wood and Leif return home over the autumn sea.

The foggy, raw, cold autumn day became great and festive when she caught sight of Leif's ship out on the fjord. A red flag waved from the mast, a signal which had been agreed upon. There came Leif sailing with her happiness on board.

Merely the fact of his being alive was like a boon from the gods. It filled her soul with summer to feel herself warm and living in his arms. Every time that Leif came home from an expedition, it was equally new and incomprehensible that he lived — lived and was near her again.

Leif came home with spring and renewal of life in his soul. That was always the case with him. The evil and dangerous unrest was gone. He had swept it out of his soul with adventures. Leif was again Leif. His cheerful laughter betokened his inner quiet. There was noise and bustle wherever he moved, but there was a contented assurance in his voice and look.

To Helga, at any rate, it seemed worth while to have endured the pain of longing and anxiety during the summer in order to have him home again. The eager tone of his voice alone, when he asked questions or related incidents, made her heart swell with happiness. She could forget both to answer and to listen, and just



cast herself on his neck because she must, because it was so delightful to weep and laugh out her happiness with his arms round her.

Leif never returned empty-handed from an expedition. Besides the serfs and goods which he had this time gained, he had acquired a new name — Hjor-Leif.

Ingolf, Hallveig, and Helga were all obliged to laugh loudly the first time they heard him called by this new name. Leif began at once to explain eagerly, and with a little embarrassment, that it was not a name which he had himself assumed — one of his men had bestowed it on him of his own accord. But it was plain to see that he was proud of the addition to his name, and did not like their laughing at it.

They questioned him with curiosity about the sword which had given occasion for the name — a valuable sword which few remembered to have seen the like of.

Leif answered with great seriousness that there was a ludicrous story connected with that sword. He had told it once to his men. But it was not a story one went spreading about. He had no intention of repeating it. His old headman, on the other hand, was fond of relating it. He was by no means disposed to let Leif's adventure pass into oblivion. And he related it in such a way that one did not sleep quietly for several nights after hearing the old man's quavering voice relate the unheard-of terrors which Leif had experienced in the cave. He certainly deserved to be called Hjor-Leif, especially since he himself liked it — on that all were agreed, when they had heard of the way in which

Leif had gained his sword. And so from that day he was called Hjør-Leif, and nothing else.

Neither Ingolf nor any one else doubted that the story was true. The sword in itself was sufficient proof. Moreover, it was so entirely like Leif not to be satisfied with fighting living men, but also to have to test his strength with the dead, and to come well out of the encounter.

Hjør-Leif was, as we have said, not to be persuaded to narrate the story himself. He was not at all fond of being reminded of it.

His other adventures, small and great, he was generally willing enough to relate. And he took them by no means seriously. His description of the way he hung out over the cliff, clinging to the handle of his ax and being thrust at by sharp spear-points, might have made even a dead man writhe with laughter, although in itself there was nothing pleasant in the situation. The Leif who revealed himself behind such experiences, and could relate them in such a light and completely artless way — that was the Leif whom Ingolf loved and could not resist. For a long time after he had heard Hjør-Leif tell of the little hollow and the flat stone, Ingolf could have a fit of laughter merely by thinking of it.

Hjør-Leif confided to Helga, and Helga alone, a wonderful story regarding which he was not sure whether it was an actual experience or a dream. Upon an island he had swum to he had met a hermit who from some mysterious characters on some pieces of skin had

deciphered a long and wonderful account of a place which was called Paradise, and a bird he called the Phœnix. Had Helga ever heard the name of the place or the bird? No, Helga had not. And even though Helga in her heart thought that there was no limit to Hjor-Leif's possible experiences, she gave it, nevertheless, as her view that it was very likely a dream. Hjor-Leif also thought it might be. For part of the story or dream was that the hermit had given him shellfish to eat, and that he really had eaten them. That could in any case not be the fact, for he cherished the most decided dislike to raw shellfish. *That* must at least be something he had dreamt.

All the same, the story about the monk continued to haunt Hjor-Leif's mind and disquiet him. For a part of the dream which he had not confided to Helga was — that he had stolen his sword from the monk. That was a bad dream.

When Hjor-Leif returned home from the Viking expedition of the summer, Ingolf had already sold such of their goods and cattle as could not be stowed on board the two ships. He had also sold his dragon-ship. He confided in a quiet voice to his brother that he intended hereafter to lead a perfectly peaceful life. Hjor-Leif once more remembered his dream of the hermit on the island, and said that he also had had enough of these expeditions. They agreed that Ingolf should purchase from Hjor-Leif his share in the vessel, and that Hjor-Leif should then exchange his two ships for a powerful trading-ship. Ingolf had in his journeys seen one that

might suit him. The matter was arranged, and everything was now ready for their departure in the next spring.

It was the season when the first winter nights were powdering the earth with frost.

And now began a lively and unquiet time for the sworn brothers. Relatives and friends came from near and far to spend some days with them. The whole of this last winter in Dalsfjord there was a festivity and bustle which made them all giddy with hilarity, especially Hjor-Leif. His irrepressible mood infected Helga. She gave herself away and forgot everything, even her most secret troubles — she forgot everything in the one fact that she just had Leif. They let day be day, and night be night, and merely lived — lived in a state of blissful intoxication, which excluded everything except absorption in the present happiness of their souls. Often when Helga was falling asleep, she thought, “You will not wake in the morning,” and smiled happily. Her happiness was so deep that death and life ran into one.

There was no pause in the festivities. When there was no feast being held in the house, they and their guests and servants were invited to week-long feasts in other houses. Among their kinsmen and friends there were already at this time many who said that if Ingolf and Hjor-Leif prospered in the new land, they also would sell their properties in Norway and migrate thither. Norway was no longer what it had been. They knew no longer whether they were free yeomen or King Harald’s lease-holders. Lately one of Harald’s

Jarls had murdered Atle Jarl the Slender. Haasten held his right and inheritance by Harald's permission. And there were many situated as he was. Every one who dared to murmur had forfeited life and land. It would certainly be a good thing to find a free place so far away that Harald's hard arm could not reach.

Hjor-Leif reminded Ingolf that he had long foretold that. There was no need to fear solitude in the new land. Before many years had passed, the whole of the great island would be taken in possession by the best men of Norway.

Hjor-Leif spoke contentedly and undisturbedly about the matter. He was himself, as usual, not aware of any responsibility. Upon Ingolf the prospects of many following them thither had a different effect. He was quite weighed down with a sense of responsibility and anxiety. Was the land out there in the west so good that he could justify drawing others by his example from their inheritance and the country of their race? And, above all: *Was* it the gods' will that he should journey thither? Ingolf arranged a great Yuletide sacrificial feast. And now he wished to ascertain the will of the gods.

On the first night of the feast he cast lots. Some chips or sticks, dipped in sacrificial blood, were tossed in a cloth, and he read off the characters formed by the positions which the chips assumed towards each other. Far to the left lay a chip by itself, straight up and down, a clear character, an "I." That signified "ice," and seemed to mean that he should travel. The next character was even clearer. Some chips had so

arranged themselves that they formed the runic character "F." That signified "cattle"; goods and wealth. There was no fear of making a mistake. Ingolf read off still more characters, but they were all propitious, with the exception of a single death-rune. Well, one could not escape death by not travelling. That came to each one on the day assigned by the fates. Ingolf was reassured.

Winter passed, and the days increased in light and length. Then came a spring day. It was a warm and festal spring which fell in step with winter's mood.

The sworn brothers launched their vessel and loaded it with goods and implements, men and cattle. Ingolf had taken the pillars of his high-seat on board, together with all the images of the gods from the temple.

Leif sat doubled up with laughter and watched Ingolf and his men dragging with solemn intentness the worm-eaten and bedizened pillars of the gods from the temple down to the ship. Was Ingolf, then, no wiser?

Helga awoke from her trance of happiness as she stood with her hand in Hjor-Leif's and sailed out between some small islands covered with spruce and fir, from whence a strong pine-scent was carried towards her by a gentle breeze. Hjor-Leif felt her hand grow cold in his. He clasped the slender fingers more closely. Had he clasped them too closely? Her little hand began suddenly to tremble in his. He looked into her eyes with a searching and slightly troubled look. But there was nothing the matter. She smiled her quietest and happiest smile at him. He kissed her, made her sit in shelter, and wrapped a skin round her, so that

she should not feel cold. Soon they were outside the islands. The wind blew stronger and more steadily. Before the bellying sails the two heavily loaded ships steered over a sea blue with spring.

## VI

The sworn brothers' ships lay rolling violently, rocking and pitching in the heavy swell south of Iceland. The day was calm and warm. High light clouds were spread over the deep blue vault of heaven. The sun poured his strong spring light in broad floods over sea and land.

That day it was fourteen days since they had sailed out from Dalsfjord. For fourteen days they had been in the power of the wind. A storm which tore the sails and broke the yards had driven them about over a raging sea, which ceaselessly sent cold showers of spray over the low gunwales. From morning till evening, from evening till morning, four men had stood in each vessel with the two baling scoops, working for life to keep the water out. In spite of being continually relieved the men were at last so worn out and wasted that they could scarcely eat, and fell asleep and rolled over wherever they sat down even for a moment.

By continual watchfulness and clever seamanship the brothers had succeeded in keeping their vessels together. Each stood day and night at the rudder. Only in the short intervals when the wind turned, or there was a short pause, did they throw themselves down to sleep

for the moment as if dead. They had no time to think of Helga and Hallveig. Helga was careful not to be in the way. She rendered the small service she was able to do under these circumstances as much as possible without making herself observed. Hallveig sat with her boy in her lap and let the wind blow and the storm rage. She kept her eyes on Ingolf and felt safe.

The sworn brothers fought for life and death with storm and sea. The great thing was to hold out, not to give up, not to think of anything but what concerned the steering and the quantity of canvas they should carry, not to be wearied, not to lose one's head — to hold out, to hold out. It was just this unceasing struggle which kept up their courage and spirits.

The animals were ill and starving; some of them died and had to be thrown overboard, others lay in their last agonies, pitiable to see. Much of their corn and other food-stores was spoilt by the dense showers of spray. The fresh water in the casks sank regularly and irremediably. The men went about slackly, and had to be kept going with a hard hand. There was hardly anything on board which was not otherwise than it should be, and giving reason for deep anxiety. But the brothers held out.

When at last on the previous day they had seen on the extreme verge of the northern horizon a light from the snow-covered interior of the new land like a faint white gleam, each had thought within himself that it was not a day too soon.

During the last twenty-four hours the storm had at last slowly quieted down, and now they lay here, held up



by a presumably only short calm, a few hours' sail from the coast, and gazed curiously and expectantly over the sea at the land in the blue distance.

The ships lay side by side, kept in their places by long boat-hooks, only so far from each other as was necessary in order to prevent their chafing and injuring their sides.

Hjor-Leif and Helga had gone on board Ingolf's vessel in order to greet him and Hallveig and to talk over the situation. All four were seated, Hallveig with her little boy in her arms, on the stern poop. After severe trial they had passed through there was a silence over them which was difficult to break. They had not yet grown properly accustomed to the fact that life and death did not hang on each moment as it passed. Therefore they spoke but little. Towards the north-east and north-west the soft lines of the slightly rising and falling glaciers stood out behind the blue mountains that crowned this flat land. The brothers followed the changing contours of the country with a peculiar tenderness in their eyes. But their gaze always turned back to the glaciers which shone sparkling white in the strong sunshine.

Hallveig and Helga also could not turn away their eyes from the glaciers. The few words which they now and then exchanged were said in low tones, as if they sat in a temple, and not at sea on a swaying vessel.

Ingolf and Hjor-Leif had long sat silent side by side, inspecting the land with keen eyes. Between a projecting point a long way to the east, and another far to the west, there stretched a flat, unbroken coast-line,

distinctly marked by a white edge of rolling surf.

"It will be difficult to land here," concluded Leif at last, in a slightly hard and irritated tone. "Also, it seems as if most of the land nearest the shore is barren sand."

"There are enough landing-places by the points," Ingolf answered quietly, "and behind the sands the land may be good and fertile, even close up to the glaciers. We saw that on the eastern side last summer."

Ingolf was in secret rather disappointed that they had not found the Svanefjords again. But he did not speak about it. It was not possible to look for them now. At present, the great thing was to get on land as quickly as possible, and almost anywhere, so that the men and animals could have a good rest and recover.

The sworn brothers had agreed that they must settle for the summer and the coming winter on the spot where they landed. Afterwards they might look out for a permanent residence. Ingolf had very decided views with regard to the choice of a dwelling-place. These views, however, he had not yet confided to Hjør-Leif, nor to any one else. The matter concerned the gods, and in all that concerned them his brother's attitude was a foregone conclusion. Hjør-Leif, on his part, only thought of finding a pleasant and fertile spot, preferably by the sea, and protected by the mountains, where he could feel himself at home and be comfortable.

For a long time they sat in silence, each deep in thought. Ingolf reflected how he had best communi-

cate his plan to Hjor-Leif. He saw at once that it was no good to be silent about it longer. For already, before they departed from here, it must be put into execution. He sat and felt rather perplexed inwardly, and could not find words.

At that moment Hjor-Leif was sitting and reflecting over an experience which he had had the previous night. He had lain asleep in his bearskin bag while his old headman took charge of the tiller. Suddenly he started up from sleep, having certainly dreamt of something or other he could not remember, and as he did so he collided with a man who must have been stooping over him. It was one of his Irish serfs, Duftak, a man whose evil eye had followed him since he once in wrath had stretched him on the ground with a well-deserved blow. Hjor-Leif was not certain, but it seemed to him that the serf had thrown something or other which he had in his hand overboard, just as he had stumbled against him and stood opposite him. He thought he had heard a little splash as when a hard object strikes the water. But he was by no means certain of the matter, and neither the serf's eyes nor his behaviour had betrayed anything. He had asked him what he was doing here, and it seemed that he had come to look after a roll of rope which lay close by. Hjor-Leif had had his thoughts occupied the whole day by this occurrence. He had already observed for a long time that the serf's eyes followed Helga wherever she went and stood, with an evil and at the same time covetous look. He could not understand why he had not already thrown the serf overboard, and why he did not intend to do so.

He was quite sure that it was not from fear, although there seemed to be a peculiar understanding among his Irish serfs. It was rather because he could not do without serfs, and because if he killed one of them it would be safest to kill them all.

At length Leif unwillingly shook these thoughts off, and asked curtly: "We shall sail southward, I suppose, when the wind gets up again?"

Ingolf was silent. It was certainly about an equal distance to the two points, and he had a very great desire to seek a landing-place near the more easterly of the two.

Instead of giving a direct answer, he began cautiously: "I have thought, brother, that I for my part will let the gods decide where I should settle in this new land."

Leif, whose temper at the moment was a little off its balance because of the incident with the serf, gave a hard laugh: "How will you go about it?"

Ingolf pointed to the pillars of his high-seat, which lay lashed together with strong skin straps above a pile amidships.

"I will throw the pillars of my high-seat overboard. Wherever they drift to land, I will settle."

"Even if they drift to land in the middle of the sands here?" asked Hjør-Leif incredulously and a little scornfully.

"The gods will know how to find the place where it will be best for me and my family to settle," answered Ingolf, undisturbed. "I lay with confidence the choice of a dwelling in their hand."

Hjor-Leif was silent for a long time. There was a hard and pitiless line round his large mouth. There was Ingolf again with his cursed gods! At last he spoke, without looking at anything: "Instead, then, of our choosing a place for ourselves where the earth is fertile and luxuriant we are to settle wherever it pleases the wind and current to wash up a pair of dead planks on shore."

He talked himself into a bad temper. And he wound up bitterly: "We shall hardly be neighbours, then, brother!"

Ingolf sprang up from his place. He was on the point of giving an angry answer when he remembered suddenly a snowy day when he and Hjor-Leif had ridden alone over a desolate heath. He shut his lips tightly, and stood for a while silent, leaning against the tiller. In his eyes there was a seeking look which wandered in perplexity over the water. The sun's glimmer dazzled his eyes. He could not find a word kind and cautious enough to answer with. But his resolve stood immovably firm. Suddenly he collected himself, and, calling a couple of his men, bade them take the high-seat pillars down from the pile and lay them on the gunwale. So he stood for a little and let his hands glide carefully over the age-browned wood.

Hjor-Leif sat watching with a hard, evil look in his grey eyes. Cautiously Ingolf let the pillars glide overboard. He remained standing, and followed them with his eyes as they lay there floating on the bright, oily water. Hjor-Leif could only see his back. There was an air of decision and resolve about that back which

irritated him still further. Hallveig and Helga had followed the conversation, and now sat silent and anxious, not daring to look at each other. Helga did not at all reflect which of the two was more in the right. She was simply troubled. In her gentle mind there rose a strange, impotent fear which made her heart beat heavily and painfully.

Hallveig, on the other hand, was at first in her inmost heart on the point of justifying Hjør-Leif. At the first moment it appeared to her that one's own eyes' choice of a dwelling could always be as good as that of blind gods, nay, really much safer. But when she had sat for a while with her firm, open gaze fixed on Ingolf's back, a change took place in her mind. The air of security and assurance which was about her husband's whole person, and which his back just now so distinctly expressed, had an unconscious effect upon her. She understood all of a sudden that it was just this sign from the gods which was needed in order to attach her husband's heart firmly and unbreakably to his new home. There, where the pillars of his high-seat drifted on shore, Ingolf would feel himself at home with all his soul and in spite of reason. The gods' choice of the place would give his strength and will the firm ground without which, in spite of all his strength, he could not thrive. On a spot so chosen Ingolf would force happiness and prosperity to dwell in the face of every imaginable difficulty. For in alliance with his gods he was invincible.

Hallveig sat there and became assured and peaceful in mind.

She understood that it was from an unwaveringly sure and wise instinct that Ingolf acted when he cast the pillars overboard. It was of vital importance to him to feel himself in covenant with his gods and in possession of their favour.

Hallveig stooped over her little boy and kissed him on the forehead, and remained sitting for a while with bowed head, lest any should see she had tears in her eyes.

With beating heart Ingolf stood and watched his treasured pillars tossed by the billows, lightly, aimlessly, as though they were ordinary pieces of driftwood. It was not without severe internal conflicts that he had resolved to deliver his dearest possession to the power of the sea. But here life was at stake. It was not only a matter of finding a place where his cattle could graze and his house stand, but of finding exactly *that* place which the gods willed to grant him and his family. The place where they could know he would stay for the future. The place where his and his family's happiness and prosperity were not only under his but under their care and responsibility.

When Ingolf had stood for a long time watching the pillars, which gradually drifted astern in an easterly direction, his displeasure towards his brother disappeared. He turned slowly, and, with a peculiar smile upon his young face towards the others, went quietly and seated himself by the side of Hjør-Leif.

"What do you think of our choosing the eastern point as a landing-place, brother?" he asked in a quiet and friendly tone.

The question irritated Leif. There was no talk of choice; it was merely a question where a piece of drift-wood should decide their landing.

“I have already for my part chosen the west,” he answered firmly, and at the same time as quietly as he could, and not without a certain satisfaction at the effect of his words.

But it was not only on Ingolf that Leif's answer had the effect of a well-directed blow. Both Hallveig and Helga felt that here was something evil and dangerous going on. Quite involuntarily Helga called Hjør-Leif's name in a supplicating tone. She had no idea of wishing to influence him in the least degree. She knew him, and was aware that it was hopeless. The word fell like a prayer from her gentle and anxious soul. In one hot wave the blood mounted to Hjør-Leif's head when he heard Helga's voice. “You can remain with your brother, since you prefer that to following me.” The bitter words leapt from his mouth. Helga broke down in a heavy and despairing fit of weeping. Leif sat motionless, and apparently unmoved. But in his breast there tore and tugged a fierce and intolerable pain which was not far from making him powerless. It was not at all, as it now appeared, a sudden whim which caused him not to wish to have Helga on board again. It was the scene by night with the serf, Duftak, which from the beginning had given rise to the thought in him that Helga would be really safer on Ingolf's ship. Some vague and groundless presentiment or other, which made him still more sensitive and impatient, told him that there was



danger in the journey for him and Helga. It was nothing but pure tenderness for Helga which made him resolve that they should part before they were all quite on shore. This time he had not thought of parting from Ingolf. But in a moment Hjor-Leif was completely in the power of his restless temperament which, as so often before, distorted his words and actions and drove him to hasty resolves. To separate from the others, and seek another landing-place, with the prospect perhaps of not seeing them for a whole year, was for him a much greater trial than for Ingolf, to whose equable temperament a year's separation contained nothing unthinkable or alarming. Hjor-Leif could really not imagine how he could hold out merely a month, much less a whole year, without them.

And if he now chose to land in another place than Ingolf, each for the present would have to remain where he landed. But it was completely impossible for him to expose his dependence and pain at parting. He could neither humble himself nor subdue his spirit so far as to enable them to discuss matters reasonably. As soon as the fateful words were out of his mouth he was helplessly in their power.

While thoughts and feelings were rushing like violent streams through Hjor-Leif's lacerated soul, Ingolf had already succeeded in reviewing the matter reasonably. In separation there was the advantage that the one who first found a landing-place could, by kindling a fire on his point, inform the other, who perhaps would be seeking a landing-place in vain, where he could look for one. Ingolf, with a seaman's practised eye, had long before

discovered that the coast here was difficult, not to say impossible to land on. It confronted the open sea. The heavy swells, which were certainly almost always prevalent here, would shatter any ship that tried to land on the sands. It was by no means unlikely that the character of the coast near the two points might be equally difficult. And it was impossible to know if the coast east or south of the points was better. Since Leif now wished it, Ingolf had for his part nothing against their separation, for some days or for a year, as it might happen. He therefore quietly proposed that whoever first succeeded in landing should kindle a fire on his point as a signal to the other. The latter could then make for that place, if he had not found another harbour before, or in the contrary case might answer with a fire on his point.

Hjor-Leif briefly agreed to this arrangement. It was he who had settled that they should separate, and yet it was a severe disappointment to him that it was now finally decided on. "I may come southward in the spring, if I have not by that time found my pillars," said Ingolf quietly, when the matter of the fires had been settled. "But if I should not come, I will send you a messenger, if I have not heard from you before."

Hjor-Leif nodded curtly. It was incomprehensible to him that Ingolf could sit there and talk so quietly, as if nothing had happened between them and everything was all right.

"If you find my pillars," Ingolf continued, with the same immovable calm, "take good care of them, and let me know of the discovery as soon as possible."

Hjor-Leif made no answer. Internally he swore that if he had the luck to find the infernal pillars it would be a joy to him to let the fire devour them.

All conversation gradually died out among the four persons who sat there, swinging on the sea, swayed by the balance of fate, each mind filled with its characteristic inner thoughts, peace or unrest, wearing pain or assured contentment — sat there in the grip of their own souls and of blind powers, while the brilliant spring day glided into a light, soft night.

The red sun-gold over the sea in the west faded and died away into other and colder colours. The world was new and strange, and charged with presentiment as always on the boundary between day and night. The four sat there, and let the day go and night come over their peaceful or irritated silence. Ingolf's little boy, Thorsten, slept quietly in his mother's bosom. All around was quiet. Peace was there for whomsoever had a mind to receive it. The brothers sat side by side, yet each in his own world. Ingolf, as always, kept his mind collected, was his natural self, and knew it. Just as he ate what nourished his body of the good things of sea and earth, so his mind absorbed whatever benefited him from the changing moods of day and night, sea and heaven and earth. Everything else remained lying untouched and harmless outside the tightly closed circle of his mind.

With Hjor-Leif it was otherwise. He had no collectedness in his mind. Every kind of experience or mood which approached him was seized by the tentacles of his restless heart. Evil and good, health and injury — his

hungry nature swallowed and satiated itself with all, without any other result than merely to increase his burning desire for something — a condition or an experience — he knew no name for it. In a measure he was himself just as Ingolf was. But his self was volatile and difficult to grasp. It died away in grief and gladness, as though it were a part of them.

Thus the night passed. And when day again bordered the east, it was folowed by a gentle breeze from the sea which could be used for sailing equally westward or eastward.

Hjor-Leif rose and heaved a heavy sigh in the cool morning air. His last hope: A stiff breeze from the west, which would oblige him to follow his brother, was gone. Helga and Ingolf both rose with Hjor-Leif. Helga went to him, put her arm round his neck, and pressed close to him. No prayer came from her lips, but her whole soul was a prayer.

Hjor-Leif examined his mind and found a fear there — some misty foreboding of impending disaster, which determined him to stand firm, to be hard both towards himself and towards her.

He responded to her caress, but not in the wholehearted way which would allow him to forget his words and revoke his determination not to let her follow him. There was a distinct air of separation in his kiss and in the gentle passing of his hand over her luxuriant fair hair.

So Helga gave up her hope and submitted silently to his will, as she had always done.

Hjor-Leif silently gave Hallveig his hand in farewell.

She looked firmly and inquiringly at him, and pressed his hand silently. There was something about Hjør-Leif, the man who was so unlike Ingolf, and whom she did not understand, that stirred something in her heart.

When he had left her, she suddenly, called after him: "Good-bye, Hjør-Leif, till we meet again. We shall take good care of Helga."

Hjør-Leif turned towards her with a forced and wry smile on his irregular features — a smile which betrayed such a pathetic and involuntary gratitude that, immediately after he had turned and gone, Helga fell into Hallveig's arms, and both wept. They had suddenly divined, with the sure instinct of women, that it was out of tenderness and love that Hjør-Leif had let Helga remain behind. There was much in the whole sudden arrangement which they did not understand, but this they did.

Ingolf followed Hjør-Leif to the gunwale amidships. The men were engaged in drawing the ships close together with boat-hooks. The distance between them had gradually become so small that he could soon spring over into his own ship.

"I do not rightly understand why you let Helga remain behind," Ingolf said at last, when Hjør-Leif already had his foot on the gunwale.

Hjør-Leif paused, and stood still a little, without meeting Ingolf's searching look. "I cannot give you any reason," he answered at last, and the hardness and gruffness in his voice spoke of feelings of quite another sort in his heart, "except that in my judgment it is the best for her."

Ingolf's whole bearing clearly showed that the answer did not satisfy him.

Hjor-Leif became irritated. "I have ten serfs and only ten freemen," he continued in a firm and rather annoyed tone, for he did not like, not only before Ingolf, but also before himself, to clothe his forebodings in such a distinct shape. "I cannot always be at hand, and the serfs are not reliable. I may fall sick and misfortune come upon us. Many things may happen. Are you satisfied?"

Hjor-Leif's tone was still equally hard and unyielding. But Ingolf had seen through him, and smilingly reached him his hand. Hjor-Leif squeezed it with his iron claw so that it hurt, and stood meanwhile with averted face; his features worked visibly, and he bit his lip till the blood came. Hastily he let go of Ingolf's hand, and at the same moment sprang into his own ship.

Immediately afterwards Ingolf heard his voice from it. It was cuttingly sharp, and rose higher and higher in a torrent of words. It soon appeared that Hjor-Leif had quickly succeeded in putting life into his men. Soon after, his ship, with sail hoisted, glided away before the light breeze.

Ingolf stood and thought that such a lonely year might do Hjor-Leif good. He would be a different man the next time they saw him. Ingolf only lent a momentary hearing to the voice of a strange wounded and groundless sense of loss in his soul. Quietly he turned round, roused his tired men mildly, and bade them hoist sail and make the vessel clear.

As early as the next night Hjør-Leif saw a fire shine from Ingolf's point. So Ingolf was already on land, and everything was right there. Hjør-Leif had not fared so well. The westerly breeze he had so strongly desired had come when he had no more use for it. It had come too late, and very inopportunately. After forty-eight hours he lay here pitching in the choppy seas, tacking as well as he could without getting much nearer his object. There was not a drop of fresh water on board. The Irish serfs had discovered how to knead meal and butter into a mess they called *mintak*, and declared that it was a food one did not get thirsty by eating. None the less, all were suffering with thirst, and the animals were in a miserable condition, unable to swallow a straw of the hay they had brought with them. The *mintak* quickly fermented, and the whole mass had to be thrown overboard.

It was only Hjør-Leif's wretched and indomitable obstinacy which prevented him from taking advantage of the wind and quickly running his ship to Ingolf's point. By doing so all his sufferings would have been got rid of at once. It needed only a little resolution, a slight change of mind. The wind was there, the light was there. The fire gleamed and beckoned. All was well so far. The only difficulty was that the deciding little possibility was wanting — the possibility of Hjør-Leif's bending his mind the little bit that was necessary — the possibility of giving way. In Hjør-Leif's volatile soul there towered a steep rock. He would see his animals perish of hunger and thirst, his crew perish one by one, and himself die by any death

whatever rather than turn his vessel and use the favourable wind.

At last, on the evening of the third day, a little rain fell, and Hjor-Leif succeeded in collecting some water in the outspread sail. That refreshed both men and animals. Not till four days after Ingolf had kindled his fire did he see a fire burning in answer on Hjor-Leif's point. When he told Helga that, she went up on the point, sat by herself, and stared fixedly at the faint red light, sometimes hardly visible, far to the south-west. There she remained sitting for two days and nights, as long as Hjor-Leif kept up his fire in order to be sure that it should be seen.

Ingolf and Hallveig had at last begun to be anxious for Helga, for she ate nothing, did not sleep, and hardly answered when they spoke to her.

But when after these two days spent up there on the point she returned to the tents, she was herself again, and had recovered her old self-command. There was nothing to show either Ingolf or Hallveig that she carried about a burning sense of bereavement. Neither did they know that she lay whole and half nights sleepless, breathing in fancy the rich, delicious scent of pine trees.

## VII

For the second time in his life Hjor-Leif lost his spirits completely. After closer reflection he found his lonely situation so meaningless and unjust, so devoid of all reconciling elements such as, for example, a pros-



pect of adventures or opportunity for exploits — in brief, so utterly irrational, that he involuntarily began to show his teeth at existence by drowning himself in perpetual melancholy, only now and then interrupted by isolated attacks of ill-temper.

The days encountered him heavily and sulkily. It seemed as if all their endeavours were directed to show him in earnest *how* empty and tedious and intolerable they could be, if they seriously set about it. The bright, cloudless summer days sneered at him when they met him with ice-cold scornful light from sunrise to sunset. Grey and rainy days, on the other hand, showed him without disguise their dull side. Hjor-Leif could not come to an agreement with himself which of the two kinds of days was really the more intolerable. They were all alike impossible. The one point he was clear about with regard to the days was that he had without doubt still the worst remaining. He cursed them with oaths which were powerful both in length and strength, and derived from an inexhaustible supply. But they were no help — not even momentarily. In the battle with the days he suffered one defeat after another; they were far stronger than he. They were invincible. And they possessed, although he daily experienced that, in spite of all, they did pass, a peculiarity of appearing endless, which deprived him of all hope.

Hjor-Leif tried in every way to put a little meaning into them.

He set his freemen to build a winter dwelling, a house nineteen fathoms long. It was to contain them all, together with their wives. He had only taken

young, newly married people with him from Norway, with the single exception of his old headman. Hjør-Leif did what he could to take a little interest in the work. But it was only self-deception. The days did not for a moment let go their wild-beast clutch on his neck.

He set the serfs to build a house eighteen fathoms long, and bullied them till they quailed and shivered and fell into helpless embarrassment merely at the sight of him. Yes, he instilled a wholesome terror into the Irish serfs. They slunk about, and hardly knew whether to walk upright or on all fours. And they had no eyes — at any rate, there seemed no more any sight in their eyes. Regarding them, he felt sure that he had made them harmless for ever. But it brought him no comfort either to treat them like dogs or to realize their harmlessness. That did not bring a spark of his spirits back. There was nothing to rouse them in that quarter.

One of the items in Hjør-Leif's despairing and hopeless struggle with the days was going along the shore and choosing driftwood for his buildings. When he found a stout, solid plank, he marked it with a stroke of his ax; then he bade the serfs find the planks so marked and bring them home.

Sometimes in these wanderings, Hjør-Leif found himself standing and hewing wildly and meaninglessly at a plank, as though his life depended on cutting it into a plaything for the winds. Whenever he awoke from such an attack of frenzy he looked round him with a shamefaced expression, and began eagerly, with a

strong sense of humiliation, to efface the traces of it, watched by the evil eye of a hostile day.

Hjor-Leif had one hope, and only one. His longing, strongly reinforced by his despair, had treated with the rocky pride of his soul, and the result was a reasonable agreement.

Therefore he went everywhere and searched for Ingolf's high-seat pillars. Not in order to do away with them by means of fire, but to get an excuse for seeking Ingolf at once, and so obtaining an honourable and acceptable victory over all that pained and plagued him. Hjor-Leif wanted to see what the day would look like when by finding the pillars he was able to escape from his wretchedness with a bound.

This hope sustained him. But day after day passed without his finding the pillars. Not even the sea and tides were friendly disposed towards him. He talked in a loud voice with the sea, and reminded it of all the honourable bouts they had had with each other. But either the sea did not hear or would not recognize him. It had perhaps become hostile towards him, like everything else in heaven and earth. Hjor-Leif had been as far eastward along the coast as the impassible glacier streams would let him go. Now he turned westward. He took food with him, and remained away four days and nights. During his expedition he came to know a new part of the country which he liked, and where he could well imagine himself settling.

Below the green mountains, which first in a steep ascent and then with a more gradual incline rose towards the white glacier which with its two domes reminded

one of a female giant's breasts, the low land stretched with fertile meadows and picturesque bush-covered valleys and luxuriant pastures towards the shining sea. In the south-west green precipitous isles rose from the sea. Hjor-Leif gave the mountains names after these islands, which simultaneously limited and enriched the view, and called them Island-mountains. The western dome of the glacier he named the Island-mountains' Glacier; the eastern he had already, after a more eastern district, baptized Myrdals-Glacier. Hjor-Leif did not turn round, for he saw the land open into a wide bay towards the west. He examined the shore outside the Island-mountains and Myrdal very closely. It was a great disappointment to him that the pillars had not drifted on shore here.

Hjor-Leif returned home from this excursion still more taciturn and depressed than he had started. Wearing unrest received him with open arms every morning and did not release him from its evil embrace till sleep at night had pity on him.

He set some of his men to get in hay, others he made go out fishing, the rest he kept occupied with the houses. It was an insignificant alleviation of his trouble to see his men busily occupied. For himself he had no patience for anything. On the walks which he now and then took along the coast to assure himself if the pillars had not drifted on shore in his immediate neighbourhood, he was no more accompanied by even the smallest hope.

During these walks Helga was always in his mind. But not openly and consciously — he scarcely had pa-

tience enough to think of her in that way. No, secretly and hidden away she lived in his mind. Through memories and reminiscences she was near to him, without his being obliged to face the fact that they were divided from each other by a long distance and a sea of days, and that this separation was due to a stupid and certainly quite groundless foreboding. He carried these memories about very tenderly and cautiously, without any intention of letting them slip quite out of the fog of unconsciousness. As a man dying of thirst sips dew, he cheated himself into a reminiscent happiness. It was a dangerous proceeding. For *if* he woke from the dream, his agony flung him on the ground in a passion of tears, unworthy of a man, and which, moreover, brought no relief.

Hjor-Leif became at last weary of the sea and shore. He turned his mind against them and made enemies again — evil emptiness and helpless melancholy — Nature's immovable answer to all discontent. So Hjor-Leif became hostile to all things round him. The echo of his own mind met him everywhere and tortured him as only self-inflicted pain can torture.

He extended his lonely wanderings to the wide-stretching pastures, overgrown with spreading coppice-wood, which reached from his point right up to the blue mountains. But also in this region he soon became homeless. His inner want of peace drove all peace around him away.

When winter came, Hjor-Leif sat like a bear in his lair, alone with the fire and his half-share of the nineteen-fathom-long house. It was uncomfortable near

him. Therefore his men kept together in their end of the house, even though no fire burned there. They were newly married, and felt neither cold nor dull.

The serfs slunk in now and then, by twos, with fuel for the fire. They shivered, and came hurriedly away from their task, even though Hjor-Leif sat with his head in his hands and did not look at them at all.

Hjor-Leif was poor now. He was so poor that he caught himself longing for the break in the evening's brooding silence, which the serf's coming caused. So poor, that in order not to betray his poverty he showed himself perverse and ungracious towards his old headman, when the latter once overcame his embarrassment and, out of devotion and sympathy, sat with him one evening. Either he was silent with the old man in his own comfortlessness, or he pained him with scornful words and malicious laughter. The old man could not understand how Hjor-Leif had lost all his good temper and indomitable spirits, unless the evil spirits of this strange land had deprived him of them. He could not endure this land where Hjor-Leif, his favourite, had neither living nor dead foes to fight with. There were plenty of wizards and goblins here, as he had himself experienced. There was an unearthly life in the rocks and heights. But these were creatures without value for a man eager for battle. One could not attack them weapon in hand. The sacred iron could only protect one against them, and keep them out of the house.

Hjor-Leif's old headman fought bravely with his fear and discomfort for an obviously bewitched man. But

there came an end, and he also gave up Hjør-Leif and let him sit alone by the fire.

For days and nights together the storm and hail beat on the house with howlings and threatening hootings. The winter days were often only an indistinct glimmer. And in the uncanny winter night all evil spirits were loose.

Hjør-Leif sat through the long evenings in his bitterness alone by the fire. And even the fire, his only friend in the wintry emptiness, now showed fits of enmity, and spat out evil smoke which struck his breast like a tearing cough.

Hjør-Leif sat most often with his face in his hands. By doing so he, as it were, shut himself into himself, and cheated in a measure the evil powers in him and round him. But there was a danger in thus sitting hugging his pain. Solitude used the opportunity to whisper words of madness in his ear. And often Hjør-Leif was near forgetting himself, and beginning to listen to its alluring, unbridled talk.

But then sleep came, and saved him, and gave him some hours' forgetfulness. A forgetfulness which, however short it was, armed him for the morrow's encounter with a hostile, desolate, and lonely day.

## VIII

Now there is this to be told of Ingolf, that when he had found a practicable harbour, and unloaded his ship and drawn it on land, he set his men immediately to

work at building winter dwellings for men and animals.

He himself rode about on horseback, followed by a young serf, Vifel, who had grown up in his father's house, and whom he valued greatly. He examined the district, and took long rides along the shore to look for the pillars of his high-seat. He made use of his opportunities, and was satisfied. The district suited him in many ways. From his point he commanded a wide view eastward and westward along the coast — the most extensive view he remembered to have seen.

Some distance inland, exactly opposite the point, divided from it by luxuriant pasture-land, there rose a steep, high mountain. On both sides of it the circle of mountains retired, on the south-west side in a wide curve. Behind this mountain rose the glacier, a gigantic pile of ice glittering white in the distance, which sent wrinkled feelers down all the ravines as if to taste the lowland. Remarkably enough, no cold emanated from this huge mass of ice; on the contrary, it seemed to warm the air, perhaps by attracting all the bad weather and cold to its far summit, which was only seldom visible. On both sides of the point there stretched barren sand along the coast intersected by countless glacier streams. These sands in some places spread themselves inland till they met the edge of the glacier. But the wide-stretching pasture-land along the mountains, which this barren sand surrounded, was of a peculiarly rich fertility. There was abundance of coppice-wood, which in places grew close up to the glacier and presented a singular appearance. The cattle throve well here. The air was full of warm moisture, and was suitable for grass and



cattle and men. Ingolf had to admit that the summer was better and the soil more luxuriant here than in the Svanefjords. At the same time, he wished his pillars would drift ashore in the Svanefjords. And in this Hallveig was one with him.

Secretly he derived not a little hope from the circumstance that the pillars had apparently taken an eastward direction when he saw them drift away from the ship. Who could say? — perhaps it was to the Svanefjords! He did not dare to wish anything in that way; it was for Odin to decide it. And it would be presumptuous of him to wish to instruct or to influence the One-eyed with the ravens. But many things pass through one's thoughts which one cannot control. Odin must know that and would excuse it.

Ingolf endured the suspense for two months. Then he prepared for a long expedition with his serf, Vifel. Hallveig did not like this journey. Both Ingolf and his men had told her so much about the impassable glacier streams. Ingolf, however, quieted her by promising to show all possible caution. But he wished to go and look for himself in the Svanefjords.

Ingolf and his serf rode over the sand-dunes. On each sand-hill sat a gull. Full of an injured sense of proprietorship, the birds sat there and followed silently with an inscrutable look these strange animals who brought disturbance into the landscape. These sands were intersected by a countless number of powerful glacier streams. But fortunately the glacier proved passable in that part, so that Ingolf and his companion succeeded in circumventing the rivers in that way.

On the evening of the second day they were again stopped by a glacier stream as broad as a fjord, and with a treacherous bottom of fine sand. It traversed the district Ingolf and Leif had penetrated on their expedition southward from the Svanefjords the previous summer. Ingolf tried to circumvent it in the same way as he had the other river. But here the glacier was so full of deep crevasses along and across its course, that after many vain attempts he had to give it up. There was nothing for it but to turn round and put off the examination of the coast till the winter had bridged with ice the impassable rivers.

The remainder of the summer passed in winter preparations of all kinds. There were plenty of things to take in hand and look after.

Ingolf kept an eye on his sister, Helga, and showed her great friendliness in his words and behaviour. He could not exactly ascertain the real state of her feelings. She was quiet as ever, and all smiles and good-humour. She played with the boy, helped Hallveig, and there was apparently nothing in the least the matter with her spirits. But Ingolf had now and then, early in the morning, before any one else was up, surprised her standing staring with a long look towards the distant mountains that showed bluish in the south-west. In that direction lay Hjør-Leif's point, although so far away that it could not be discerned. It cut Ingolf to the heart to see his sister stand gazing so — her face was so unusually pale in the mornings, and her blue eyes darker than at other times, as though shadowed by a twilight below them.

He had been many times on the point of telling her about the last words he had exchanged with Leif. For he knew that she was not aware of Hjør-Leif's real reason for letting her remain behind with himself and Hallveig, and had no idea what she thought about it. But on further reflection he gave up the thought of telling her every time. Perhaps by doing so he would only cause her unnecessary anxiety and sorrow. She would certainly hardly be so quiet as now, if she were seriously anxious for Hjør-Leif. Best not to interfere with her thoughts. For his own part, Ingolf was not for an instant afraid of anything happening to Hjør-Leif, though he agreed with him that it was best not to expose Helga to the results of any conspiracy among the serfs, which he might well have reason to fear. But Ingolf knew Hjør-Leif. Even if his brother had been alone with the ten seditious serfs he would not have felt anxious for him. Hjør-Leif was on the watch, and he had successfully managed worse situations.

The winter began with slight frost and much snow. It was past Yuletide before the rivers were frozen.

As soon as possible, Ingolf equipped Vifel and another of his serfs, named Karle, and sent them eastward along the coast with orders to examine closely every creek and every promontory, and not to return till they had inspected both Svanefjords, except in the event of their finding the pillars before.

The serfs experienced wretched weather, with snowstorms and intense frost. They remained away for two weeks, and returned hungry and weary. They had examined the coast-line as far as north of the Svane-

fjords, but seen nothing of the pillars anywhere. When they had informed Ingolf, he heaved a deep sigh and gave up the Svanefjords.

He allowed the serfs time to rest and recover after their severe experience. Then he ordered them to get ready again. This time he gave them horses and sent them westward along the coast. He enjoined them not to return till they had found Hjor-Leif. If they had not found the pillars before they met him they were to tell Hjor-Leif to come westward with his men and cattle as soon as summer was in the air and a sea-passage was safe.

But spring came this time earlier than it was expected. Already in the night before the serfs started, a warm and strong south-west wind began to melt the snows and melt the ice that covered the rivers. The serfs only succeeded in passing the nearest rivers on ice. By the second day they could neither get forward nor backward by reason of furious rivers which carried huge volumes of muddy water and great blocks of ice. But they had to push on, and did so with the horses' help, although they often wasted days in finding a ford, and sometimes had to let themselves be dragged through the water, hanging on to the horses' tails or manes. It was the worst journey that Vifel and Karle had ever been out on, and it was only due to Vifel's endurance and fidelity that they went forward and escaped with their lives. On the way they met men — Irish monks — who here far inland had built a temple with a brazen voice which shook the air. The monks questioned them, and seemed displeased with what they had to narrate.

They did not show them much friendliness. But Vifel and Karle were eternally thankful for merely escaping with life from these strange men who were in covenant with a god, the sound of whose voice alone cast them terror-struck to the earth.

At last the serfs reached Hjor-Leif's point. They had been fourteen days on the journey. They found the houses empty and the place forsaken. They went down to the shore and found the ship. The boats, on the other hand, were gone. Not the slightest sign of life was visible anywhere.

## IX

Hjor-Leif saw the winter come to an end at last. He lay one night and heard the tone of the wind change. He knew the eager and implacable voice of the south-east wind. It did not surprise him then to hear a dripping indoors and out.

His heart began to beat a little as he lay there. But he lay still, did not jump from his bed, did not run to salute the spring and bid its warm wind take the bad weather from him, as in other circumstances he would have done. There was not much left of Hjor-Leif's strength now. He did not awake with the spring. Generally he was accustomed to avoid the house when spring had first come. But this time he remained within, sick in mind, and without power to shake off the burden of winter and his bereavement. He remained sitting indoors while the young year awoke the earth

from winter's sleep, without paying attention to it. That was not like Hjør-Leif. Indeed, it was so unlike him, that his men avoided each other's looks and did not speak about him. He got out of his bed each morning with a sigh, clothed himself wearily, and went slowly and sluggishly out to see how far the spring was advanced, and if the weather held. If it was bright he went up on the point and looked eastward over the land and over the sea. Then he went home again, dragging his feet like an old man or an invalid, and wrapped himself in his solitude and waited. It was still too early in the year for Ingolf to be coming — Ingolf and Helga.

He hardly dared to think of her name. The very thought scorched and burnt his wounded soul that by this separation which he had insisted on he had caused Helga fresh grief. His own sufferings were indeed bitterly deserved — that he had to acknowledge — but that did not make them any easier. The thought made the wilderness of his soul even more desolate. Self-caused, self-deserved, every torturing day, every sleep-forsaken night, every suffering, every whip-lash of longing, altogether self-caused, without reason and to no use. That was bad enough to think about. But it was worse with Helga — Helga who might have reason to believe that he had left her behind in cold blood, and to think that perhaps he looked forward without longing to seeing her again. The thought was so intolerable that at times it seemed as if his head would split and his heart stop beating. These and similar thoughts tortured Hjør-Leif, but he sat and let the tedious hours pass.

Outside, the spring winds raged, while he sat within. The spring's gladness found no way to his soul. His exhausted heart could not welcome the days in its embrace and rejoice at the prospect of soon meeting Helga.

Hjor-Leif used every opportunity of bullying the serfs. He heaped on them kicks and blows whenever the fancy took him, and often without cause. He hated these serfs, who crept before him like vermin, so dog-like and abject that they did not dare to show the glances of their eyes. His fear of their combining and attacking him and his men had long ago died out of his mind to the last spark, and it seemed to him now both ridiculous and incredible that he had ever cherished such a thought. These abject animals, these crook-backed creatures! *Their* fault it was — all that he had had to suffer this year. And they should pay for it! To the end of their wretched days they should pay for it! Blows they should have — blows and kicks. He would fill their currish hearts with never-appeased fear. He would not kill them; they should live and suffer. In all that concerned the serfs, Hjor-Leif was implacable. He had succeeded in inspiring them with such terror that there was not a look in their eyes, nor speech in their tongue, save when they were alone and sure of not being seen or heard.

As soon as the earth was released from the frost to a spade's depth Hjor-Leif set his serfs to plough a piece of pasture-land west of the point. They had an ox to draw the plough.

And now the serfs' time had come. Duftak, who had

many kicks and cuffs to avenge, had hatched a plan. The opportunity was ready to hand.

When Duftak and another serf went off in the morning with ox and plough, he gave the other serfs a signal. They had knives and clubs hidden here and there. Now these were produced and concealed in their rags. The serfs were ready.

As soon as Hjor-Leif's free men had gone into their morning meal, Duftak stabbed the ox with a knife in its neck and set out running home with the other serfs close on his heels. Breathlessly Duftak burst in to Hjor-Leif, and stammered, apparently in the greatest terror: "A bear! A bear!"

The serf's fear seemed quite genuine. Hjor-Leif seized him by the neck, shook him, and quickly learnt from him that a bear had come out of the wood and had killed the ox.

Everything happened as Duftak had foreseen. Hjor-Leif let him go, strangely enough without the usual kick, shouted to his men, and bade them follow him and look for the bear, and scatter themselves well in the thickets, so that the beast should not escape. Then he seized his ax and spear and ran.

Ah, this meant something for Hjor-Leif. His heart was again in its place, and beat gladly and quietly. The bear came as though sent by good fortune itself. His soul expanded with a great and happy sense of freedom. He sprang like a boy out of doors, and forgot in his haste to take his sword with him.

Duftak only hesitated a brief moment—then he seized the sword and ran after Hjor-Leif. He had un-



dertaken to tackle him by himself alone, and the sword was better than his short knife.

Everything happened as Duftak had calculated — while his men dispersed in the thicket, Hjor-Leif ran to the ox. Duftak had counted on this curiosity in his master. He knew that he *must* see how the bear had treated the ox, before he began the pursuit. Hjor-Leif set off in long bounds, light at heart and untroubled. The old love of adventure had awakened in him. He was too much absorbed to notice that the serf was close at his heels.

Hjor-Leif reached the ox, stopped and started, bent down over it, then slowly raised himself. His thoughts stood still for a moment in surprise. What was this? The ox had been stabbed. Was the story about the bear only a lie? He turned quietly and as though stupefied, and looked round him.

Just opposite him stood Duftak, with Hjor-Leif's sword lifted — the point quivered straight in front of his breast.

The recollection of the monk's saying flashed through Hjor-Leif's mind, like a momentary weakness and irresolution. Then — before he knew it — the gold-inlaid blade of the sword flashed, and he collapsed with a chill sensation between his ribs — a strange, not uncomfortable sensation, which, however, was immediately followed by a pang and a loud crash, in which earth and sky disappeared.

As Hjor-Leif sank, a lightning thought reminded him that Helga was in safety. Ah, Helga was safe! A dim consciousness that he had not suffered in vain settled

like a faint smile on his large mouth. The blood poured steaming and gushing out of his neck. And so the world passed from him. . . .

Hjor-Leif had lived, and life had done with him. He had paid the price of life, as was meet and right.

Once more the mistletoe branch had struck down the invulnerable.

## X

One night towards morning Ingolf was awakened by the tramping of horses' hoofs. He had begun to be anxious lest the serfs, who had been away the best part of a month, might have perished, and, springing out of bed, dressed quickly and threw a cloak over him.

Yes, it was Vifel and Karle home at last. When he came out, they were standing outside in the half-light night and talking softly together. They had not yet taken the saddles off the horses. Their manner showed clearly that they were the bearers of evil tidings. Both turned their heads when Ingolf opened the door, but remained standing irresolute, and forgot to salute.

Ingolf stood still for a moment. Then he went up to them, greeted them quietly, and bade Karle take the saddles off the horses and go and sleep. "You had better not talk to any one," Ingolf concluded, turning to Karle. Then he laid his hand on Vifel's shoulder and led him round behind the house. There they could best stand and talk undisturbed. Vifel was so silent that stillness seemed to envelop him like an invisible vapour in the air.

When they had come to the back of the house, Ingolf

let go of Vifel's shoulder and leaned against the wall of the house. His first heavy foreboding had quickly turned into a dawning certainty — a certainty which all but overpowered him. For a few interminable moments he remained standing there, leaning against the wall, and staring to the eastward, where a faint flush on the steel-blue vault of the sky announced the coming of the sun. He avoided looking at Vifel, whose expression and behaviour so inexorably revealed what had happened. He shrank from having his last despairing hope annihilated. He must have an interval before he could endure to have his fears, his all but certain foreboding, confirmed by the pitiless word.

The sun rose and was free of the clouds on the horizon before his mind had slowly reached the point that uncertainty was intolerable to him.

He cast a glance at the serf. Vifel stood and wept, silent and motionless. The tears ran in streams over his cheeks, and left light streaks behind them.

“What have you to tell?” Ingolf asked at last, with forced quietude.

“Hjor-Leif's death,” stammered the serf, with chattering teeth.

There was a long pause. Ingolf had bowed his head, and stood with closed eyes and compressed lips. He wept.

At last, without raising his head or opening his eyes, he gave the serf a sign to continue.

Vifel finished weeping and began stammeringly: “When we came to the point we found the houses empty. We saw no one anywhere. We found the ship in its

place down by the shore, but both boats had gone. We began to search the fields and the undergrowth round the point. First we found Hjor-Leif. He lay in a field near the house by the side of a piece of ploughed earth. He had been killed by a stab in the breast. We continued searching, and found gradually most of his men, scattered about in the undergrowth, all dead. Some of them had been obviously stabbed from behind, others had many wounds, which witnessed to a fight having taken place. The serfs and women we saw nowhere."

"Hjor-Leif had a foreboding of that," was the thought that passed through Ingolf's mind when the serf was silent.

Ingolf remained standing quite still. His heart hammered and beat, "Leif! Leif!" At last he lifted his head and looked round him with weary eyes. His look had become very desolate. Otherwise there was nothing to notice in him, now that there was no more doubt and the first strong burst of grief was over.

In a quiet voice he questioned the serf more closely, and learned that he and Karle had buried those of Hjor-Leif's men whom they had found. Hjor-Leif himself they had covered and left lying where they had found him.

A strange slackness had come over Ingolf. Now and then he roused himself and put a question to the serf. Each time the serf had answered, there was again a long pause.

Ingolf gradually got an account of their journey. Vifel told him of the difficult rivers, of the monks and

their temple, and how he and Karle had caught and killed one of Hjør-Leif's sheep, which they had found in the thicket, as food for their home journey.

Helga was up this morning early as usual. She was generally out before any one else, especially when the weather was bright. It was in the early morning that she could best go out, unseen and undisturbed, to stand and gaze towards the distant mountains in the south-west which hid Hjør-Leif in their blue mist.

This morning, as soon as she stepped out of the door, she heard quiet voices behind the house. She could not distinguish words, but only heard the sound. This half-heard conversation filled her at once with a peculiar fear, and when she recognized Vifel's voice her heart beat violently. A vague alarm filled her breast and rose choking to her throat. For some time she remained standing and could not move from the spot — stood leaning heavily against the house-wall, and pressed her hand to her heart. Then the voices were suddenly silent. There was stillness behind the house. What could Ingolf and Vifel have to talk about in such a tone? Why had Ingolf not roused her at once? She knew how restlessly he was expecting the serf's arrival.

At last Helga dragged herself the few steps round the house. She both hoped and feared that she must have made a mistake — that it was not Vifel's voice she had heard. But she *must* have certainty. Her fear was crushing her.

Yes, there stood Vifel, and there stood Ingolf. Helga only needed to see them; the first glance told her everything. Ingolf immediately saw his sister, and by a

powerful effort succeeded in collecting himself and going quietly towards her. As he went, he said quietly to the serf: "Go and sleep, Vifel. You are a free man." Vifel departed silently. He did not take the opportunity to thank Ingolf. His highest hope was at last and unexpectedly fulfilled, yet he wept as he went.

When Ingolf had reached his sister he stood still in perplexity. There was in her look a mingling of prayer and certainty which made it impossible for him to say anything. There was a restlessness about Helga which made it impossible for her to stand still.

"Let us go," she said appealingly. Side by side brother and sister went over the ground without speaking a word.

Where the coppice wood began, they turned and went back towards the houses. So they continued walking to and fro, silently, side by side. The sun had risen, and already stood high.

Ingolf's men, who had learnt of Hjør-Leif's death from Vifel, kept within doors. None wished to disturb Ingolf and Helga. Hallveig had been out and glanced towards the pair. Then she had slipped in again to her boy. Helga's grief made her very heavy at heart.

To and fro, keeping step, Ingolf and Helga went. Helga felt as if she could not stop. As long as she could walk so, keeping herself in movement, it seemed as if there was nothing which had ceased — ended. So long as she had heard nothing, perhaps nothing had happened. There were life and happiness at stake in continuing to walk — to walk, and not stand still.

There was no sobbing in Helga's breast. It was so

empty within. A clammy pressure held her heart imprisoned in apathy. There were no tears in her eyes. She was far past the narrow limits of weeping. Only a great and threatening stillness and emptiness in her soul, and round her a waste wilderness that would swallow her as soon as she stood still.

At last she was so exhausted that she had to drag herself forward with the help of her brother's arm. Ingolf helped her, supported her, and held her up. He was in great distress. She walked there quivering on his arm, and he had no comfort to give her. Such heavy hours Ingolf had never experienced. He forgot his own sorrow: it was as nothing beside his sister's mute despair. His whole soul was engrossed in her. His powerlessness, his complete perplexity, his lack of any word to comfort her, drove all other feelings out of his mind.

At last Helga had to give up. Her strength was spent. Exhausted, she sank in his arms. He laid her carefully down, and she remained lying with half-closed eyes, breathing heavily and slowly; then she fell asleep. Ingolf remained sitting by her side and gazing intently on her pale, tired face. She continued sighing in her sleep. Ingolf could not take his eyes from her. "This was what Leif feared," was the thought that echoed within him. There were not very many thoughts in his brain, stunned as it was by his own and his sister's grief.

When he had been sitting thus for some time, Hallveig came out to him from the house with her boy on her arm. She could no longer endure the loneliness.

She sat down silently by Ingolf's side. Her eyes were circled with red rims, and there was a peculiar wry smile on her face, called forth by the struggle to keep her tears down. When she had sat a little and looked at the sleeping Helga, she could do no more; she leant her head against her husband, hid her face, and wept.

Little Thorsten prattled cheerfully, and struggled to get down to Helga. Ingolf had to begin to play with him in order to make him sit still. The child's untroubled chatter cut him to the heart.

Helga slept but a short time. Suddenly she opened her eyes, rose abruptly, and looked about her in bewilderment.

"What is this? Why am I lying here?" she asked in an astonished voice. As soon as she spoke, she felt a choking in her throat, and remembered all of a sudden what had happened, and why she lay there. Then she collapsed with a groan, and remained sitting for a while with her face hidden in her hands. Then she straightened herself abruptly.

"How did it happen?" she asked in a hoarse, uncontrolled voice, and looked straight in front of her with a hard expression on her young face. And when Ingolf did not answer at once, she added in a still more unrestrained tone: "Tell me at once!"

Ingolf told her, hesitatingly and in disconnected words, that his serfs had found Hjør-Leif and his men dead. It looked as if Hjør-Leif's Irish serfs had killed them.

"But the women?" Helga asked in the same tone as before.



Ingolf gave it as his opinion that the serfs must have taken the women with them to whatever hiding they had sought. He added a few cautious words to the effect that he had grounds for supposing that Hjør-Leif already a year ago had been afraid of what had now happened, and that therefore he had let her remain with him and Hallveig.

Then Helga laughed, if the sound which issued from her throat could be called laughter.

"It is all the same now," she said in a hard voice.

Then she collected herself and stretched out her hand toward the child. For a while she sat stroking his hair and trying to smile at him. Then suddenly she gave Hallveig the boy and looked up at her brother with a look that revealed all her hopeless despair without disguise, and said: "I want to see him. Can we not go there?"

Her voice was hoarse and passionate as before. There was nothing to recall her former soft and gentle tone, but the hardness was gone.

"We will go as soon as we can," answered Ingolf quietly.

Helga rose impatiently. She was a little unsteady on her legs, but declined all support both from her brother and her sister-in-law.

"Let us not waste time," she said irritably, and stumbled towards the houses.

Ingolf and Hallveig followed her in silence. Hallveig took the boy on her arm again.

That same day the ship was launched. Day and night they worked with feverish haste to load it. The

next day it lay ready for sea, and in the evening the weather was fair for sailing.

Ingolf wondered a little at Helga. She did not weep. She did not seek solitude. She went about among them much as usual — did her accustomed work, took charge of the boy, and helped Hallveig. Only the change in her voice and her strange, fixed look betrayed her grief — a grief which made Ingolf fear, and troubled him more than any weeping and open despair.

## XI

The next day at sunrise they were there. Helga was supported by her brother to shore on the slender landing-plank. When she stood on the shore before Hjør-Leif's point and looked over towards the houses, her strength failed her for the second time. She could do no more. She leant against her brother to save herself from falling. He put his arm round her and led her to a stone where she could sit and recover her strength. There she sat down, and remained sitting, staring out over the sea, that lay resplendent in the glow of sunrise, but her eyes saw nothing. A light morning breeze played with her hair and gently caressed her pale face.

Ingolf stood by her side, waiting. Since she so much wished to see Hjør-Leif he would not oppose it, but he wished to follow her and be near her.

Helga had forgotten him, and why she sat there. For the moment she remembered nothing except that she was alone and had Hjør-Leif no more. There were

times when this fact seemed incomprehensible. If Hjor-Leif was dead, why was she alive? She did not understand that. But so it was — she was alive. And die she could not. Death would not come to her, though she prayed for it to all imaginable Powers.

When Ingolf had stood for a while motionless by her side, he bent down over her and said quietly that he must go for a little to give his men orders. Helga started when he spoke to her, and looked hastily up at him with a terrified look in her eyes. Then she came to herself, remembered why she sat here, why Ingolf stood waiting for her, and she seized his hand. She sat for a while holding it convulsively in hers and moaning softly. Then she said in that strange, distant voice which quite seemed to have displaced her own: “Ingolf — I cannot, after all — let me just sit. I cannot rise. Ah, I can do nothing,” she said, half-wailing, and hid her face in her hands.

Ingolf stood a little irresolute; then he bent over her and said softly: “I will come again and fetch you.”

She nodded impatiently with her bowed head, as if begging him only to go — to go!

As soon as she no longer heard his steps she began a low, heart-rending wail. Ah, she had no hope now. Her heart was dead. But she lived, and could not die.

Ingolf went back to the ship, helped Hallveig and her boy on shore, and asked Hallveig to look to Helga while he went and buried Hjor-Leif. Then he told Vifel and several of his men to take spades and a bier and follow him. The others he set to work unloading the ship.

Ingolf was quite composed now. The stamp of the resolute firmness, which was the real expression of his character, was more distinct than ever before. He had reconciled himself to his brother's death as a healthy man reconciles himself to the inevitable. He had sought comfort in his faith, and had eradicated all despair from his mind, so that only a healthy, hardening, beneficial pain remained behind. He remembered the death-rune among the omens at the sacrificial feast; it had then pointed at Hjor-Leif. Yes, Fate shields a man till she strikes him — nothing can alter that. Against Fate even the bravest fight in vain. Not even Odin can shake the sentence of the Norns.

Such were Ingolf's thoughts as, with a composed mind, he went to carry out his last duty to his brother.

There had been an old agreement between him and Hjor-Leif that, if Ingolf died first, Hjor-Leif should inter him in a funeral barrow with exact observation of all the ritual of the Ase-religion. In return, Ingolf had pledged himself, if he were the survivor, to bury Hjor-Leif in the ground without any kind of solemnity. All that Hjor-Leif wished, when he no longer lived, was to be buried in a dry spot, at the depth of a man's stature, and to lie there with clean earth round him. It was no more than reasonable that he should have his will, though Ingolf in his inmost heart felt a strong impulse to inter him in a barrow and to do him all the honour which became a chieftain.

The birds were singing in the dewy morning when the sailcloth with which Vifel had covered Hjor-Leif was lifted. Their song sounded all at once piercingly in

Ingolf's ears. He stood for a while and looked at his brother's decomposed remains. He had seen many dead men, without being specially moved thereby. But now his self-control deserted him a moment. He wept. When he had grown calm again he made the sign of the Hammer over the body, and said softly, as though to himself: "A mean fate here befell a good man, that a serf should cause his death, and so it will happen to each one who will not sacrifice to the gods."

Hjor-Leif's corpse was laid on the bier, and Ingolf covered it with his cloak. Then he went on ahead up to the point to seek for a burying-place. Step by step the men carried his brother's body after him.

Ingolf quickly found a place towards the south and the sun. The grave was dug, and Hjor-Leif was lowered into it, wrapped in his brother's cloak. Then they cast clean earth over him, and trampled it well down.

Ingolf remained standing by the grave till his men had gone. Then he spoke for the last time to his sworn brother. "Hjor-Leif," he said with emotion and in a natural tone, as though he were quite sure of being heard, "if no duty had bound me to life, I would have followed you in death. The days are poor without you, brother. But I comfort myself with the thought that we shall meet again in Valhalla, and that you by that time will have made your peace with the gods."

When Ingolf had spoken, he took a thunder-stone which hung on a chain round his neck, a gift from his mother, of whom he had an indistinct memory, pressed it deep down in the earth, and covered it up. Nothing

in his eye was so sacred as this lucky stone. Therefore he gave it to his brother to take with him on the way.

Ingolf found his sister where he had left her. She sat in the same attitude; not once had she moved since he left her. Her wailing had died away. She sat silent. And when he laid his hand on her shoulder she did not start, only turned her head quietly, and looked up wearily at him. She tried to rise but had become stiff from sitting in the same position. It was some time before she could stand and walk. Ingolf led her gently over the shore, up the point, to Hjør-Leif's grave. At the grave she remained standing motionless, clinging to his arm, and gazing down at the brown scar in the earth. For the first time since she had heard of Hjør-Leif's death her eyes filled with tears. She loosed her hold of Ingolf's arm and asked him impatiently to leave her.

When Ingolf had gone, she threw herself on the grave, pressed her face down in the loose earth, and lay there weeping, silently and ceaselessly. Now she could weep. . . .

Long after Helga had wept all power of weeping out of her soul she remained lying there, with her arms thrown out as though clinging to the earth. Then at last she fell asleep, worn out with sorrow and fatigue.

When she woke again it was evening. She rose and looked around her in alarm, suddenly afraid lest any one should see her lying thus. As she stood there and looked around her, she perceived a black round patch on the greensward a little distance off. There had burnt the fire, which about a year ago she had sat

gazing at from Ingolf's point. . . . Ah, that red fire. . . .

And now it was quenched . . . quenched for ever.

Helga sat down, looking alternately at the grave and the burnt patch. Now and then her eyes filled with tears. But she could weep no more.

Later in the evening Hallveig came silently and sat down by her side. They did not speak. Hallveig wept now and then. Helga sat motionless, gazing before her with eyes that scorched and burned, but seeing nothing.

The two women remained sitting there the whole night. When sunrise streaked the horizon next day they rose quietly and went silently homeward to the houses.

## XII

Ingolf sent his men to search for the Irish serfs.

As the boats were gone, there was reason to suppose that they had sought flight by sea. And as they knew Ingolf was in the east, it was likely they had rowed farther westward along the coast.

Ingolf's men searched the coast westward for many days' journey. They saw nothing of the serfs anywhere — not even a sign that they had landed. And even if they had been drowned, their bodies must have been cast ashore. Neither did they find the pillars of Ingolf's high-seat, which they were also looking for.

When they returned home and told Ingolf that they

had neither found the serfs nor the pillars, he said in his quiet way: "The pillars shall be found and the serfs too, if I have to search the whole country." Ingolf sent Vifel with fifteen men in a boat out to the islands, which from the mountains near the point were visible in the south-west.

There Vifel found the Irish serfs. They were living in caves scattered about on the largest of the islands. When they found that they were discovered, panic seized them, and they did not even try to offer resistance. When they saw Ingolf's men coming over the island they scattered in wild confusion. Some of them were cut down while flying; others, among whom was Duftak, flung themselves down from the cliffs and promontories and perished.

The women, whom the serfs had taken with them out to the islands, and the most obstinate of whom were still kept bound, were able to tell how Hjør-Leif and their husbands had been murdered. They spoke coolly and calmly of the matter. They had forgotten how to weep and how to rejoice.

Vifel buried the serfs on the edge of the shore, where the ground is dry at ebb and covered at full tide, as criminals should be buried.

Then he searched each creek and promontory in vain. The pillars had not drifted to shore there. Afterwards he distributed his men in three boats with the women and the valuables which the serfs had stolen and taken with them to the islands, among them Hjør-Leif's costly sword. Ever since then the islands have been called the Westman Islands after the Irish serfs



Ingolf met the boats down on the shore. Vifel told him of the death of the serfs, recounted the women's narrative of Hjor-Leif's murder, and handed him the sword.

Ingolf took it cautiously. He remembered the story about Hjor-Leif's fight with the dead man, who was reported to have said that a charm attached to the sword whereby everyone who killed with it should himself die by it. Ingolf had comforted himself with the thought that so long as Hjor-Leif had not killed anyone with the sword there was no danger for him from it. Now, however, Hjor-Leif had been slain by it. Perhaps the saying meant that whoever possessed that sword should perish by it. At any rate he would not have it. Sorcery was not to be trifled with. Ingolf went straight to Hjor-Leif's grave with the sword and stuck it in the earth so that the golden handle projected from the black mould. It was the only thing left by his brother which he was unwilling to receive.

There was no danger of anyone taking it there. His men kept at a distance from Hjor-Leif's grave. They asserted that he walked again, and believed that Helga met the dead man when she went up there at night, as she often did.

Ingolf did not share their superstition in that respect. But, on the other hand, he well understood how Helga's appearance might give rise to such thoughts in his men. She looked more like a dead man's bride than a young living woman. Her fair hair had become white, and hung dishevelled about her head. The light of her glance was quenched, and the skin that stretched over

her wan, emaciated face was grey and without brightness or colour. The only signs of life she gave were eating and breathing. She carefully took charge of Thorsten, with a peculiar absent tenderness, since Hallveig had now a little girl to watch over. She did nothing else.

That summer and the following winter Ingolf remained by Hjør-Leif's point. The next spring he departed and went farther westward. He stopped at a river whose mouth formed a comparatively safe harbour. Good landing-places were generally scarce on these shores. Thither he had his ships brought. Some way inland, west of the river, he built winter dwellings under a hill, which was named Ingolf's Hill. In the summer, as always, he had his men out to search for the pillars. When they came back they were able to inform him that they had reached a great promontory. North of the mountains there was a broad fjord.

In the winter, Ingolf sent Vifel and Karle to search the coast-line north of the hills. Out on a barren promontory in a creek, which because of some warm, densely smoking springs in the neighbourhood received the name "Rogvig" ("smoke-creek"), Vifel and Karle at last found the pillars. They had drifted ashore just below a little rounded height. On the height there sat an eagle. It did not move when Vifel and Karle approached. It sat there still when they went away, after having secured the pillars. Vifel and Karle were much afraid of the eagle. Only once before had they been equally afraid — that was when the brazen voice from the monks' house had cast them to the ground. Vifel

and Karle went back and informed Ingolf of their find. Then Ingolf was glad. Now he knew where he should dwell. Now he caught a glimpse of meaning again in his life. He immediately arranged a great sacrificial feast, and made sacrifices to Odin and Thor and gave them thank-offerings.

When he heard about the eagle he became thoughtful. Neither he nor anyone else believed that the eagle's having sat there was accidental. There was in Ingolf's mind not the least doubt that the eagle had really been his old father, who, in a shape corresponding to his name, had been sent by Odin to guide and keep watch over the pillars.

Never again was an eagle seen on that height, which received the name "Orn's Height."

As soon as spring came, and the roads were passable, Ingolf left Ingolf's Hill and went over to Rogvig. The place where Ingolf's pillars had drifted ashore was a large, bare promontory. The district was stony, and there was not much pasture-land. By far the greatest number of the parts he had traversed had been better and more suitable for settling. But here it was *his* lot to dwell. And, besides, he could take possession of as large a territory as he chose, and build houses for his people and cattle-sheds where he found fertile soil.

Already that summer Ingolf began to mark out his lands. For himself and his posterity he took possession of the whole of the great promontory, from the river-mouth where his ships lay up along its curving course and across the hills to a fjord on the north side of the promontory, which was named Hvalfjord, between two

ivers, which received the names of Brynjedal River and Okse River.

Many of Ingolf's men were dissatisfied at having to settle in this unfertile region. The serf Karle, in great vexation, ran away with a serf-woman. Ingolf found them long afterwards settled inland.

Ingolf gave land to his freed serf, Vifel. He settled on Vifestofte, and Vifel's Hill bears his name. He became a well-to-do man. The next summer Ingolf went to Norway to fetch timber for his houses. He built a residence at Rogvig, which was not at all inferior to the chief seat of the family at Dalsfjord in Norway. To the residence was attached a temple which in its size and splendid equipment did not fall far short of that at Gaulum. Ingolf was faithful to his gods and showed them great honour. Since they had given him a new place of abode he felt confidently assured that he had regained their favour.

Ingolf, who daily had his sister Helga before his eyes, was often reminded of his sworn brother, Hjor-Leif. Now he understood much which he had not understood before, and caught a sight of the connection between events, which taken separately seemed accidental. He remembered the beggar's words: "Point and blade!" Now he understood what the beggar had meant. It was owing to Hjor-Leif's prompting that they had journeyed to Iceland. Hjor-Leif was really the first occupant, even though he had not come to settle there permanently. Fate, the blind and immovable, had been out after him prematurely. Ingolf's heart was moved when he remembered how Hjor-Leif

had grown fond of this land from the first. It was accordingly Hjør-Leif whom Iceland had first taken in its embrace. Hjør-Leif was the first who had consecrated the soil of the new land with flesh and blood. Had the gods, or perhaps the guardian spirits of the country, claimed him as a sacrifice? It was at any rate a great sacrifice. But Ingolf did not dare to find fault with the gods. Already the year after Ingolf had settled in Rogvig people began to flock to the country. They were for the most part Norwegian chieftains who could not come to terms with King Harald. Ingolf gave several of the settlers land in his territory.

Among the first settlers was Hallveig's brother, Lopt, who was called Lopt the Old, and many of his family, which was a good and noble one.

Haasten, Atle Jarl's son, was also among the first occupants. He had at last been obliged to leave his own lands and property and flee the country to save his life. He took some land, guided by his high-seat pillars, due east of the river which bordered Ingolf's territory. Haasten lost his ship when landing, but his property and men were saved.

The very next winter he visited Ingolf in Rogvig. On the evening of Haasten's coming, Ingolf sat as usual in the high-seat with his men at the table round him, a step lower. The fire burned cheerfully on the hearthstones and spread a genial and penetrating glow. The coarsely carved images of the gods on the strongly illumined age-browned pillars of the high-seat laughed broadly in the glaring light. The talk was lively

around the tables, and the beer-jugs were diligently emptied and filled. Ingolf was not grudging of beer to his men. He sat with a contented look in his peaceful blue eyes and listened to their talk. He himself spoke but seldom, except when questioned.

Then suddenly there came three knocks at the door. All the talking round the tables ceased. Ingolf turned his head and gave a signal to the man at the door. The bolt was pushed to one side, and in stepped a tall, erect, fair-bearded man in a red silk cloak with a golden helmet on his head, followed by three other men.

Ingolf immediately recognized Haasten, in spite of his beard and the ageing and weary expression of his thin face. He sprang up and went to meet him. He was too much moved to speak. For a while the two former friends stood silent, pressing each other's hands and looking each other straight in the eyes. Then they fell into each other's arms. When, shortly after, they sat side by side in the high-seat and had drunk to each other, Ingolf said: "I did not know, Haasten, that you were on this road."

Haasten smiled his weary, steady smile, and answered: "Yes, King Harald has driven me from the country, as I in my time drove you two brothers. Have you forgiven me that, Ingolf?"

"I have never been angered with you for it," Ingolf answered.

They spoke together of many things, and their talk was light and untroubled. There was in Haasten's attitude towards Ingolf the same deference that all other chieftains who came there showed the quiet, con-

fidant, simple, taciturn man, who by his example had drawn all the others to this new land. Ingolf was indeed his friend, and as such he showed him confidence, but he was also the first settler in the land, and as such he evinced for him a great and undisguised deference.

They talked of Hjør-Leif. "It happened as I foretold," said Haasten, and smiled sadly. "The mistletoe branch at last struck the invulnerable."

"We all owe Odin a death," said Ingolf quietly, and drew a deep sigh. "It is most often the survivors whose lot is the hardest."

His look involuntarily sought the women's dais. There sat Helga, gazing before her without expression in her eyes, with his son, Thorsten, in her lap.

Ingolf pointed out the boy to Haasten. "His name is built of Thor's name and yours," he said in a gentler voice. While Ingolf talked, he noticed how attentively his son's quiet blue eyes dwelt on the high-seat pillars. Thus he had himself sat as a boy, he remembered suddenly. And now he met his son's look. Were Thorsten's thoughts something like his had been when he was a child?

Haasten had been sitting in silence, watching the boy. Then he said suddenly: "He must have been born soon after *that* winter."

"The winter after," Ingolf answered, a little curtly.

"He bears Thor's name and mine," Haasten continued thoughtfully. "May that bring him good luck!"

He was silent a short time. Then he asked: "But who is the woman?"

“My sister, Helga,” answered Ingolf quietly. The two friends sat silent a long time.

Then Haasten beckoned to the boy, and when he came he took him between his knees, and looked closely at him. “You have honest, intelligent eyes; you will be a brave man,” he said at last, and stroked his fair hair. Then he took a heavy gold ring off his arm and gave it to Thorsten.

“That is because you are in some part my namesake,” he explained, smiling at the boy, who stood with the ring in his hand, staring alternately at gift and giver. Thorsten tried the ring on his slender arm. “It is too large,” he declared, a little offended. Then he suddenly brightened up. “But it will fit me well enough by the time father is dead, and I sit in the high-seat.”

Both Ingolf and Haasten laughed. Thorsten went to show Helga and his mother the ring. Then silence came over the two friends. Shortly after, Ingolf proposed that they should drink to their dead brother. The friends’ glances met over the rim of the drinking-horns. There were tears in their eyes.

They sat late that night and drank and talked together. They were very happy to sit side by side again. The solitude which had threatened to imprison each severally was suddenly banished. Now they had each other again, and felt the joy of friendship.

The fire burned yellow and brightly on the hearth-stones. In its genial warm light the images of the gods on the carved pillars looked down as if following all that passed with slow content, and waiting, calmly wise, for what should come.















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